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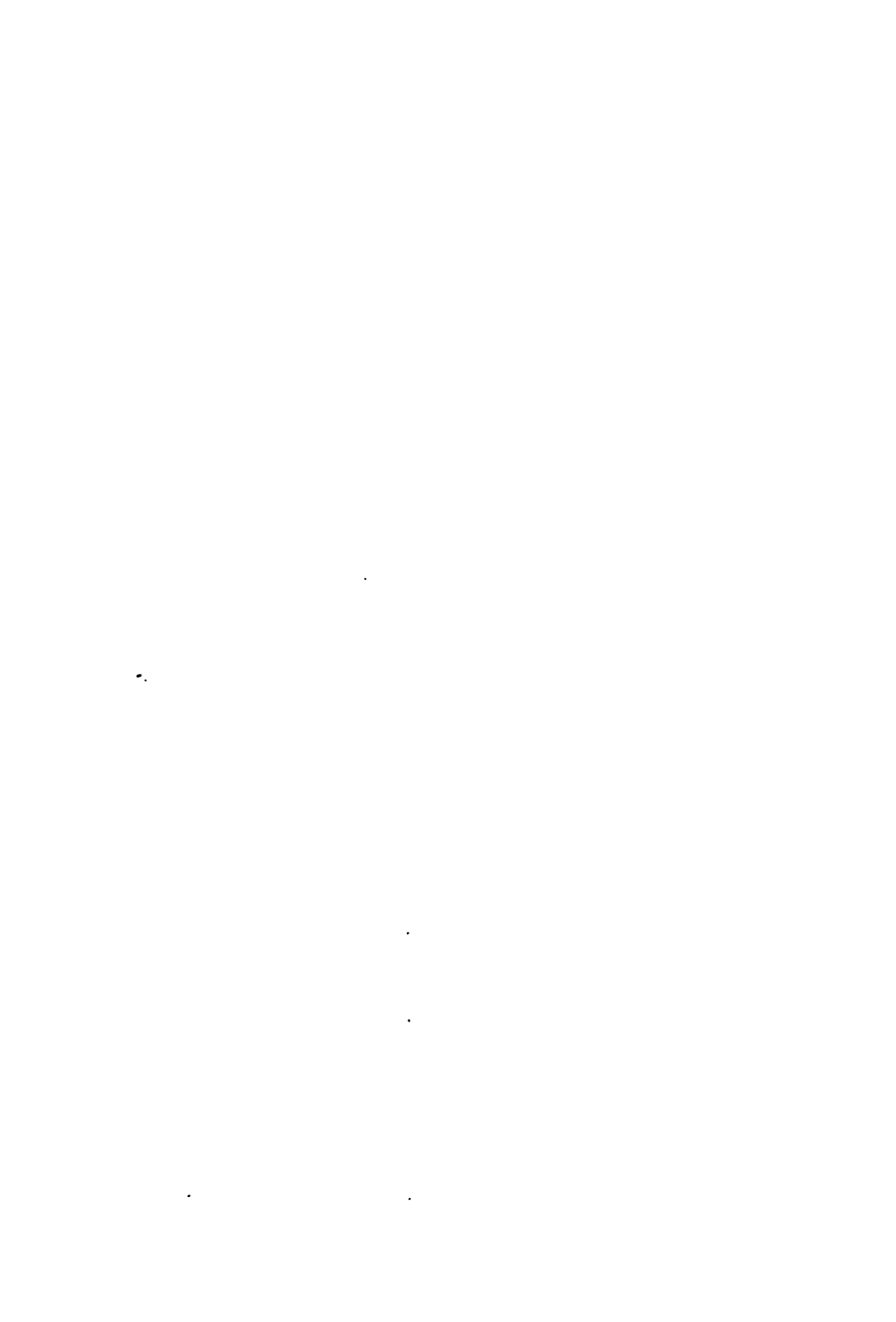
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MOCK-NURSES OF THE LATEST FASHION





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MOCK - NURSES OF THE LATEST FASHION,

A.D. 1900.

**Professional Experiences, in Short Stories,
and the Nursing Question.**

BY

FREDERICK JAMES GANT, F.R.C.S.,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION, ETC.,

AUTHOR OF

WORKS ON SURGERY;

'PERFECT WOMANHOOD;' SEQUEL, 'THE LATEST FRUIT IS THE RIPEST;
OR, WOMAN'S WORK,'

ETC.



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1900

PREFACE

MY attention has been lately drawn, very powerfully, to the conduct of nurses engaged in private nursing. This limitation at once excludes my retrospect of nursing in hospital practice during a period of forty-five years (1899).

Accumulating personal knowledge, reinforced by the experiences of many authoritative members of my own profession, assures me that the character, as disclosed by conduct (no less than the technical qualifications), of not a few private nurses is such as defames the general body of which they are

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members. Mostly, if not only, among the 'untrained' and 'uncertificated' class of women, who style themselves nurses or nurse-attendants, misconduct, in various forms, prevails, desecrating the fair fame of the rightful Order of Women, and by demoralizing many a home begets lasting misery in personal and family life. I am not without hope that the portraitures presented in 'Mock-Nurses of the Latest Fashion' will fulfil a right good purpose, by tending to eradicate some nurse-forms of wickedness and vice, who as mildewed ears of nurse-womenhood are thus blighting their wholesome sisters, and blasting their just claims to the confidence reposed in their beneficent vocation. In telling the 'stories' based on some of my professional experiences, the illustrations given of these false nurses, and of the other *dramatis personæ*, with the incidents narrated, do not pertain to individuals

—they are alike wholly impersonal characters, and yet realistic.

It behoves all women, as nurses, to bear ever in mind that they are members of a body, and that each should hold herself responsible for a professional character which she is thus bound to maintain or to retrieve.

Having so recently invoked the Muse in my only attempt to write a few stanzas, expressing my 'Farewell'—at the end of 'Latest Fruit is the Ripest; or, Woman's Work'—it would certainly seem to be, nay, is, a breach of good faith, that I should ever have issued from retirement in any literary capacity.

But I have my apology in the example set by far greater artists in other capacities, who even more than once reappear 'positively for the last time,' or on the occasion of his or her 'benefit,' in the declining years of some popular favourite. Why not, therefore, in

the case of an author who seeks to edify as well as interest the public—which latter may be the only purpose of his *confrères*—and who, writing in hours of suffering the stories he has to tell, with the types of feminine character and of other *impersonal dramatis personæ* drawn from life, reappears for no personal benefit whatever, but with a view to the advancement of the Nursing Order of Women, as ‘registered’ Nurses, and that he may thus minister to the public good?

F. J. GANT.

LONDON,

February, 1900.



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MOCK-NURSES OF THE LATEST FASHION


INTRODUCTORY

A PLEA FOR STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES

THE animated photographs and experiences to which I invite attention in the following series, chiefly in the form of stories, concern not only nurses, but the public also. Few people there are who pass through life without knowing something of nurses, in their times of needful help and care; and many remember these 'ministering angels' with the most grateful appreciation of the devoted attention, skill, and kindness with which they fulfil their duties in the spirit of a sacred calling.

But the qualifications and the personal characters of nurses *differ* widely. Nurses 'trained' in hospitals of different *grades*, and for a *variable period*, and nurses untrained, 'certificated' and uncertificated, are alike competing in any number to get 'private practice,' as distinguished from hospital work; and as their relative merits and demerits are alike covered by the title 'nurse' or 'nurse-attendant,' all share *equally* the claim for admission into the mansions, the houses, the homes of the class of society who can afford to remunerate them, according either to their perhaps equal demands for their services, or the scale of charges provided by various competing institutions of nurses. All these women dress very much alike—as roses, dipped in the morning dew of blessing, trust, and hope—angelic to the weary sufferer and sorrowful relatives and friends.

Of course, the untrained eye of wife and mother, of husband and father, cannot possibly see at first sight, nor perhaps discover by after-observation, more than the



outward appearance and manner and conversation of the new friend in need, a friend indeed. A charming attire—neat, not gaudy—decidedly religious-looking, surmounted by a pretty capped face of healthy colour and cheerful expression, or sallow and work-worn, perhaps saddened; hands scrupulously clean; a quiet, subdued, sympathetic manner; a mellow whispering voice, like the tones of an *Æolian* harp, fanned by zephyr winds in Paradise. The note-words breathe God's humanity, with consolation and cheery hope.

Even the family doctor, with his practised eye and ear, may see and hear—no more; glad beyond measure that there is such an outward form of perfect womanhood to represent his attendance in the morning, when, O God, would it were evening! and at nightfall, when, O God, would it were morning! and having full confidence and trust that, amid his toilsome rounds of day and night professional duty, he can conscientiously feel relieved of his cares and responsibilities by the Heaven-sent one; never, when 'pain and anguish wring the brow,' or

in hours of convalescence, will his patient know an evil spirit, thou !

If I were asked what in my experience are the most prevalent vices among so-called nurses up-to-date, and which most urgently need to be eradicated, I, with friendly frankness, would say: (1) Untruthfulness and slandering ; (2) pilfering ; (3) sensuality and intemperance ; (4) cruelty in their duty ; (5) idleness or perfunctory work, without any heart in it, the ruling principle of their nursing vocation (itself a sacred calling) being to get the highest wages for the least amount of work done, otherwise than in novel, magazine, and newspaper reading, letter-writing, and making articles of dress for themselves or their relatives ; with increasing hours off duty, for shopping, calling on friends, corner-of-street appointments, etc., and holidays at pleasure. Matrons there are whose disqualifications of character I am not portraying who may be disfigured by some such personal defects—*e.g.*, (4) cruelty in *their* 'duty' to patients in homes and refuges.

But if, with many 'steadfast and true' in



and to their vocation, there may be also many, some, or few, commingled with their sisters, who cannot be distinguished by the public or the professional eye, an authentic general register of names, with *uniform* qualifications and approved *character*, should be the credential for security alike for nurses and the public.

In the second Charter for the Incorporation of the Royal British Nurses' Association, of which H.R.H. Princess Christian is president, Her Majesty's Privy Council permitted only the term 'List of Nurses,' not a Legal Register.

But *State* registration of nurses would regulate more than the obvious inequalities of the certificate system, with regard to the technical qualifications and personal character of that order of nurses at present authorized by various *private* nursing institutions, or as hospital private staff nurses, each of which have rival interests, and are of unequal competency in their *competitive* certification.

The full training—perhaps the *over-training*—of certificated nurses has carried with it

the fact that the nurse is not a member of the public, but a member of the institution, and that the institution is not a member of the public, but a member of the State. The nurse is a member of the institution, and the institution is a member of the State. The nurse is a member of the institution, and the institution is a member of the State. The nurse is a member of the institution, and the institution is a member of the State.

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making herself liked, or if higher fees can be obtained' by the business-nursing speculation, the other half-share of her wages being retained for the *maintenance* of the institution, in consideration of providing her a home, in the intervals of her cases, or in the event of illness. The public still pay for the certificated nurse £2 2s. per week, as including *her* maintenance, when out of work or temporarily disabled.


In these circumstances, touching the financial relation of nurses to the public needs, an uncertificated nurse, of whom there are at least hundreds as 'nurse-attendants,' with or without adequate or *any* practical knowledge, and with or without *any* guarantee as to her known personal character and antecedents, hears, or reads by advertisement, that *she* is 'wanted'; and forthwith she undertakes the case, whatever its nature, at £2 2s. (not per week, but) per month, at the rate of £25 a year.

Surely this latter order of women—at present a social necessity—should, for the security of the public, be included (in a

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separate list) on the same legal register; and all such nursing women thus enrolled should hold a special certificate—expressly stating that they are incompletely trained or untrained, and with special regard to their personal character, the latter being a guarantee even more requisite than with regard to nurses whose personal qualities have been tried and proven in the course of hospital training under supervision—to practise in private cases from an institution or hospital, or on their own account.

The author, in presenting these papers on 'Mock-Nurses of the Latest Fashion'—whether by the unauthorized assumption of the nursing vocation, or who are imperfectly certificated—would, therefore, humbly urge his plea for 'State Registration' of the *whole* body of nurses or nurse-attendants in one common legal register; just as—and for analogous reasons—all recognised members of the medical profession are enrolled on a legal register of professional qualifications.



CHAPTER I


SATAN IN PETTICOATS

IN the stories I am about to relate wherein some mock-nurses will figure as the heroines, and of whom I would present animated photographs, the first of these in its completeness is probably an exceptional species, under cover of a nurse's dress, etc.

Nurse Lucretia is *partly* the money-seeking, fortune-hunting woman, but she gains admission to the house of sickness and death simply to play a game best suited to carry out certain diabolical purposes. There are other ladies in the world of fashion and beauty who are fortune-hunting of men, who themselves may be no less engaged in the same vocation. Some such women may be known to every reader of this book, who

has met them in the World's Mart. They are to be seen in Society's salons, as living specimens of their craft, without studying Thackeray's 'Newcomes,' in the person of Ethel Newcome, the heartless coquette who would have sold herself body and soul for wealth (and rank); more beauteous she, in her tears of remorse and loving care of her brutal brother's children, than ever she looked in the flushed excitement of the ball-room, with Lords Kew and Farintosh, with whom, and other game, she would equally divide her fickle favours. There are yet other E. N.'s, unknown to the Hogarth-Novelist; nurses whose representative portraiture an humbler artist would sketch with a pen dipped in the blood of his thought.

Nurse Lucretia is of Borgian blood—cold, calculating, cruel. She would vary the depravities of an incestuous nature; she would seduce husband, or son, even in the room adjoining the departing spirit of wife and mother; or she administers slow poison—tragically by (accidental) overdoses of some



potent medicine ; selling herself, or with a redoubled display of nursing care ; in either way to gratify the only love she ever feels—her passionate love of money. With an elderly gentleman patient, nurse-poisoner smooths the pillow, and caresses the sufferer for a post-obit bond, given to her as a tribute of gratitude for her affectionate and unremitting devotion to him ; a free gift, which shall not appear in his will, lest perhaps £10,000 or £20,000 should be disputed by surviving claimants.


Bosh ! there are no such women nurses. Yes, incredulous reader, and some such disguised ‘uncertificated’ nurse may get into your home any day—if not Lucretia, one of her blood-sisters, there to exercise her hellish trade upon whomsoever may best answer her fell purpose. She is the devil in petticoats. Here is one such ‘nurse-attendant,’ an illustration of the species, as developed up to date. She would have quite misled anyone with less knowledge of human nature and (feminine) character than a practised observer, who, while he can fully

appreciate the true and beautiful in woman is also a judge of blacking.

This Nurse Lucretia, when out of place—a frequent circumstance in her yet young life—daily consults the newspapers of fashionable or Church connection as best representing the wealthy and titled, or the saintly classes of that society among whom she looks for the most profitable find.

In reply to an advertisement, otherwise perhaps most unsuitable for a trained nurse, she would do herself the pleasure and honour of calling, feeling sure that her special knowledge in accordance with the advertisement, besides considerable general nursing experience, would enable her to give entire satisfaction in the faithful performance of her duties, similar, indeed, to those in the situation she had just left. Not a word about character or reference, or both may be offered.

Nurse Lucretia calls within a few hours, and sees the patient—if *alone*, so much the better. She is alertly in advance of other nurse applicants, some of whom arrived



during her brief visit, and are waiting in the hall their turn for being engaged, as she passes them to the street door with a jubilant expression in her face. For Nurse Lucretia has made such a personally favourable impression, that none others applying have a chance. No character or reference was needed from Lady U——, whose service she was leaving.

A mourning brooch which Lucretia wore was—she said—the gift of a family in grateful memory of her attendance upon one whose loss to them was irreparable. Time seemed only to mock their grief; and nurse often accompanied the disconsolate widower and his motherless children to the cemetery, bearing floral tributes to the power of death which had so *mysteriously* taken their loved one from them. But, ah! she had walked with God ‘on earth,’ and ‘*He* took her’ at last away. The value of Lucretia’s mourning brooch was enhanced by the additional gift of £100, two years’ full wages.

Lucretia returns in the evening to commence her attendance on an elderly lady

who, although stricken with one-sided paralysis, is singularly acute in money matters; her husband, an old man, with much of the heart of youth, is a sort of scientific religioso, and, although possessing mature professional experience in the art of healing, is not singularly gifted as a financier.

Lucretia is a spare, lithe, active little woman, of graceful figure, with a face which might have been pretty, but sadly indicative of a past, within the short life of thirty years; the features are hardly to be noticed, for the flushing cheeks, playful little mouth, slightly upturned nose, and open forehead surmounted by a frizz of auburn hair, seem lost to sight in your riveted view of gentle hazel eyes, while the ear listens to a silvery voice, as of an angel in mercy sent.

‘She is come—she is come!’ sang in chorus the second nurse-attendant with the servants, as the fascinating little woman tripped or flitted with Ariel’s wings into the bed-chamber, announcing her arrival to ‘the dear old lady.’

Yes! and as Ariel might have said to the

husband : 'Hell is empty, and all the devils are here.'

But for a moment a little pecuniary difficulty occurred, ere Lucretia could be installed to commence the duties of her beneficent nursing vocation. The cabman had carried her box on his stomach, and safely deposited the precious burden, full of dainty nurse apparel, etc., in the hall.

'That 'ere young lady has not paid my fare.'

This just cause and impediment being made known to the fare-forgetting fair one, a silvery-bell voice replied from the drawing-room landing :

'Oh, just give the man one shilling ; that is more than his due.'

Nurse Lucretia had come direct from Lady U——, and in the hurry of packing her box she had left her purse in her bedroom, under the pillow. Lady U—— would doubtless forward it (the first-named valuable article) to her by book-post. The confiding and generous second nurse-attendant at once discharged the lady-nurse's liability by paying the necessary coin. On seeing this

friend in need, however, a trace of momentary confusion passed over her self-possessed countenance ; those liquid eyes which ever met yours were downcast, and the playful little mouth, around which ever danced a smile, refused its wonted performance to its owner. Then the bell tinkled.

‘I was not aware that there is a *second* nurse-attendant in this case ; for my heart is easily won’—glancing at the old lady—‘and as my work is done in God’s service, I like to have the patient all to myself. At least, if a helper is needed, as seemingly in this case of paralysis for lifting the poor dear sufferer, I must have the sole personal charge of her, and especially in that spiritual time during the solemn hours of darkness.’

The uplifted eyes of the helpless sufferer bespoke a gladsome response to the sympathetic look and touch of the heavenly visitor ; and the simple, honest, and faithful No. 2 bowed her assent to this arrangement.

But it is necessary to mention the terms of Lucretia’s engagement. The paralyzed old lady had engaged this handmaid of the

Lord, making *terms* with her quite unknown to the old husband, and probably for this purpose she had been so desirous of seeing the patient alone. Happily, a warning voice had whispered, 'Take her on trial for a month, but terminable by either party at that period.'

The wages, even for an angel, could only be in their circumstances, with heavy additional expenses, £25 per annum, and everything found. Lucretia looked for a moment disappointed, 'perplexed but not in despair, cast down yet not forsaken,' as she would have expressed her position.

'Twenty-five pounds, etc., a year,' said she. 'Well, *she* had never received less than £50 — or in that proportion of remuneration, for her services rarely lasted so long a period as one year; but in the pecuniary circumstances mentioned, £25, or at that rate of *weekly* payment, she would accept *these* terms in consideration also of the helpless invalid, to whom she already felt attached; anxious, moreover, to meet her offer in a spirit of Christian love, she willingly and gladly thus concluded the

agreement. And she felt sure that she was sent by Him,' etc.

This agreement was, as in other similar cases, entirely verbal ; but no one had heard the terms, even the second nurse-attendant being out of the room. The patient, reduced by suffering and age, as well as having had a paralytic attack, and the handmaid of the Lord, were the only parties to the contract.

The old lady listened patiently, but with some nervous restlessness, to nurse's previous experiences, painful yet delightful, as she told them with her bewitching smile ; nursing in her skilful hands seemed to be quite a fine art, and life-giving. She told the patient of 'antisceptics' (antiseptics), for so nurse's little mouth lisped the word : 'The Röntgen rays, dear madam, for examining you internally — say your heart,' as Lucretia placed her marble hand upon that treacherous organ in her own bosom. 'Then there's the funny-graph' (phonograph), 'into which if you speak your every word is registered, and can be resspoken years afterwards, even as they are recorded in heaven.' Pausing : 'But I alarm

you ; yet why should not all we say, as well as do, be registered *there* '—with up-pointing finger : ' who say nothing but what is *true*, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report.'

Miss Lucretia B——, bearing her full name and prefix by box-label, quite captivated the simple, truthful-minded, dear old lady-patient (for so she is); indeed, some such jargon of religion with scientific nursing accomplishments had at once won her heart, and somewhat enfeebled understanding, on the occasion of nurse's first visit.

By similar tactics, it is more than probable that other nurses, who by no means rival Lucretia in the special features of her character, are prone to display their vast experiences and technical knowledge, and may thus gain more influence over a patient—albeit for no evil purpose—than the most able doctor. We shall in the course of these stories produce some further illustrations of spurious nursing methods for thus exalting the lamentably ignorant, or the unprincipled women who practise these devices.

Thus captured, in her husband's absence

from the bed-chamber, the credulous sufferer, after her first interview with nurse, had sent a message to the old gentleman below, that 'she had seen such a clever and good woman, with such delightful manner and engaging conversation—one also who would read her favourite prayer, "Thy kingdom come," morning and evening ; in these happy circumstances she had ordered Robinson, the maid, not to admit any more applicants of whatever kind.' With this message warm in his breast, the loving old husband seemed to be content, and thus relieved of his anxious solicitude for her comfort, a devoted wife's heart-to-heart union of forty years' married life would allay his own incessant suffering of several years' duration, and breathe peace to him. Was this twofold blessing—one for each of the old couple—realized ?

The old lady upstairs, of whose soul and body the ministering angel had now gained entire possession, was beautifully passive in the hands of her nurse-attendant ; grateful, as her nature is wont to be, for the smallest favour, she at once 'fell in love,' as a man


would say, with Lucretia. In the long days and yet longer nights of suffering or helplessness, almost bed-ridden for a wearisome period, this *faithful* watcher learnt, with the adroitness of the most skilful legal cross-examiner, all about her patient's family connections, her property, 'free from the debts and control of any husband'; and in return for all such confiding information Nurse Lucretia became 'the guide, philosopher, and friend' of the old wife, without at present extending her favours to the old husband.

Suddenly a change came over the spirit of Lucretia's devoted service, and in the name of Him——

Incredible as it may appear in one whose professed qualifications *seemed* to be already verified by her nursing attendance, she, under a week, gave *practical* proof of her own incompetency; moreover, nurse frankly *protested* her own unfitness, terminated the trial, and must leave that day, that hour, at whatever inconvenience and wrongful loss to the patient. But, of course, 'I claim my wages for the month.' In vain the poor

helpless, 'dear old lady' implored her all-in-all not to desert her; for, 'you know that other woman, kind as she is, can *do* little, or nothing, as you can; she cannot turn me in bed, nor lift me out of it into my chair; and, oh, the long nights without you! Remember, *I* don't terminate the month's trial.' With a deaf ear to piteous entreaties, Lucretia still protested her own unfitness—must go at once—and with the month's wages.

When the news of lovely Lucretia's immediate departure, etc., was communicated to the old husband, he, quite hitherto unaccustomed to such domestic matters, thought he understood dear nurse's *case*. She was one of the itinerant, migrating black birds of passage, who flit from place to place, quitting each within a few days, and demanding, extorting from their helpless, world-excluded victims, a month's salary for, say, three days' *service*, worthless work, the servitor being quite incompetent to undertake any duty such as answers to the advertisements they are ever scanning for an eligible 'find.' A very easy mode of making an income, with-



out any capital of ability, industry, or character.

But Lucretia *must* go ; very sorry to quit such a happy place ; but go she must really, and with the month's wages. Lady U—— had not paid her wages on quitting her ladyship's service, nor had that same ' unjust, irreligious lady ' kindly forwarded to her the purse she had forgotten in her hasty departure. Consistently with this explanation of Nurse Lucretia's position, it would have seemed more reasonable that she should have remained in her present situation, instead of throwing herself out of place, and forfeiting her wages by terminating her engagement. Certainly, however, in her unfortunate financial circumstances, Lucretia's absolute penury would explain and excuse her otherwise pitiful dishonesty in not having yet paid the shilling cab-fare borrowed of Nurse 2, as the debtor had neither received wages owing to her, nor had she come into her property by book post.

Practised as I am in thinking the thoughts of other people, women's thoughts especially,

I own that the movements of Lucretia's mind puzzled me, so that I could not interpret to the old husband the real motive for nurse's sudden decision.

She demanded a month's wages for under a week's service, determined by her own professed inability to continue the duties of her engagement. 'She could,' she said, 'summon either the (paralyzed) patient or her husband to the police-court, and thus prove her rights, as by agreement, and get her lawful wage,' this threat being accompanied with a fierceness of utterance by the playful little mouth, a resonant tone of the silvery voice, and a gleaming fixed glare of the gazelle eyes, utterly unbecoming the placid, gentle, loving woman, up-to-date.

Unfortunately, the poor old wife's condition rendered her totally unable to appear as witness in a police-court, and as she *alone* had made the (verbal) engagement with Lucretia, her astute threat was as idle as it was heartless.

But 'No,' she went on to say, 'she knew police-courts very well, and she knew the

law. Her father was a barrister, only she was not on terms with him. It would not become her social position for her to appear in court, as the case would be published in all the morning papers, and she would be identified in connection with a petty claim for wages as nurse-attendant, when it might not be known to a wide circle of friends that circumstances had compelled her to adopt a calling below her birth.'

Accordingly, Lucretia was quite willing to remain, but in the service of the old husband as *cook*. 'She had,' she told him, 'gained considerable experience in the culinary art, especially for invalids. This offer she made, knowing that the dear patient had already engaged another, and far more capable, nurse-attendant, who would arrive in the evening ; and as she understood that the cook was having a holiday from that day, she would gladly take *her* place—as a matter of convenience—in the household arrangements.'

To the regions below Lucretia descended, there to exercise her culinary art in preparing

such delicacies by her own little hands as might as much please the palate and suit the stomach of the invalid as in her nursing capacity she had ministered to other bodily wants, and had fed the soul with good things. The old husband's appetite, not so fickle, would be more readily satisfied.

The most astutely vicious people are often the most blindly stupid, and are wont to give evidence against themselves. It was so with Lucretia. She readily entered into an agreement—in writing—to the effect that she surrendered her claim for a month's wages as nurse-attendant. She agreed to remain in service, as cook, for her *own* convenience, and that *one week's* such service, at the same rate of wages, would satisfy her previous demands for a month's remuneration.

On the following day she appeared in the dining-room, her gazelle eyes bent down : the playful little mouth with silvery voice expressed her desire to 'just look again at that agreement.' From the moment Lucretia then realized the meaning of the terms to which she had 'willingly' affixed her signature, she

disclosed a new element of her composite character.

Spite, such as only a fiend could feel, found every opportunity for stirring up strife among the servants of a hitherto peaceful household. So well did she succeed in the new part she played, that before the end of the week she informed the old gentleman that all his servants were going to leave at a month's notice, an intimation which she feared would put the 'dear patient' upstairs, as well as himself, to serious inconvenience. A similar announcement having been made to the paralyzed invalid, Lucretia might well have felt satisfied with giving the old couple this timely information ; but mortification, such as only malice can feel, was her reward, seeing that neither husband nor wife was in the least disturbed by the news, they knowing full well that years of faithful and affectionate service could not be terminated by heartless desertion.

O woman ! have all thy petty vices, and none of thine angelic virtues, become incarnate in some nurses of the latest fashion ?

At first Nurse Lucretia's cooking fully justified her claims. Excellent beef-tea and other products of invalid cooking were served up to the old lady, while the old gentleman, himself a great sufferer, fed, as it were, by manna from heaven, began to feel the renewal of life in the hands of the angel-cook, breathing a prayer in return that old Mrs. Clipper might be induced to extend her holiday *sine die*.

About the third day of this course of nutriment, the wife, who during more than a year's bedroom incarceration had slowly regained such general health as made her life tolerable, although still afflicted with infantile helplessness, began to throw out symptoms of internal distress. Persistent diarrhoea, a burning throat, and thirst, bespoke continued *irritation* of that tract within the body through which passed the products of the culinary *art* with alarming rapidity. What the irritant might be which thus seemed to convert the stomach into a saucepan for boiling its own contents, while the bowels were the sink for cleaning and washing out

ere the receptacle was used again, might have been a mystery to any other old man beholding his poor old wife in writhing agony at times, rallying again when the invisible enemy was withdrawn, and so on. But in the evening, when the first piteous scene in this tragedy was enacted, fortunately the husband, having a bedroom ticket of admission, and being a judge of blacking upon the fair skin of womankind, had studied the cook specimen who, under cover of nurse-attendant, had got into his wife's service.

Sitting in the dining-room, after witnessing his wife's agony, the old man fell into a trance with his eyes open, and conscious of what he saw, otherwise in a state of abstraction. Suddenly the door opened, and a lurid vision entered : with outstretched arm, the withered bony hand and forefinger of another old man pointed at the seeming sleeper. Spellbound, the visited could not rise from the couch on which he reclined. The visitor, with a tone of voice more of sorrow than of anger, said : ' Beware of your nurse-cook ; beware of the

would-be *murderess* for money ; beware of the bigamist, of the widow, as she is not, the liar, the religious hypocrite, the prostitute, the *swindler*, the common *thief* !

The old husband, awakening as from the abyss of hell, rose, tottering, and rang the bell. The vision vanished. But cook, thinking it might be some special invocation of her culinary art for dinner on the morrow, answered the summons.

‘On this occasion,’ the old husband said, with resonant voice, ‘it is I, your master, who order you to quit this house immediately. You are a woman with a past,’ said he, as their eyes met.

‘Thank you, yes,’ replied the satanic Nurse Lucretia. ‘I own I have a most romantic past for a young lone woman, if all were known.’

‘But I know something more of you.’

‘Do you ?’

‘You are a woman without a future, except a prison or death.’

‘Thank you. Do you know *that* ?’

Lucretia never looked more self-possessed,

calm, gentle, modest, kindly - cruel. But Robinson, the maid, found her in the hall, hanging over the stair-rail in a fainting condition

To forthwith get rid of nurse-cook, thus convicted, was yet no easy matter. She not only had the effrontery to reclaim a month's wages by the wife's verbal agreement with her as nurse, which, if valid for three days' service terminated by herself, she had afterwards cancelled by her willing signature to the terms of the written agreement for one week as cook. She now claimed a month's wages in that capacity—two months in all for both services. She 'knew the law,' and 'she would certainly lay her case before the police magistrate, Mr. P——n, who would protect her rights. No,' on *second thought*, 'she would not.'

But why, in addition to her vocation as swindler, should Nurse Lucretia have been cook-poisoner in this case? Money moved her influence over the mind of an old lady who is exceedingly susceptible to kindness, unsuspecting in her own simple honesty, who

possesses property in personal estate, at her own disposal by will.

Now, the mysterious reason for her desire and determination to suddenly relinquish her nursing attendance on her victim was evidently explained by the circumstance that cook's holiday gave Lucretia the opportunity for carrying out her diabolical design. Her greed for money had impelled her to practise the old trick of demanding wages not her due, but she at once relinquished her fraudulent claim in view of her far larger expectations under the will, in the event of a successful issue to her cooking service.

Lucretia's second thought took her out of the house without further reconsideration.

After her departure, the 'dear old lady' patient sent a piece of note-paper to her husband in the dining-room: 'That woman has carried away all she could rob me of, without detection.'

You poor wretch! you once fairest image of God in woman! you the most hideous image of evil in woman! you whose past has been briefly told by your (falsely-named)

husband's apparition, here is your life-history and picture completed, up to date.

Behold a vision of your three children, legitimate and illegitimate, the offspring of your girl-womanhood, of incest, or bigamy ; your husband a deserted wanderer in the wild woods of Australia ; your present 'husband,' abandoned to the charge of a motherless babe, is yet free from the threatenings of his life, not, I am sure, by violence with your little hand. You have since traded as the adulteress and secret murderess. You are now about to offer the withered flowerets of a dead heart in another bigamy. As Miss —— you, of course, wear no wedding-ring emblem of a past unknown. Which of two men will now become the victim of your cold, calculating, cruel, perfidious nature ? That young widower with four children, whose motherless offspring are pledges of a devoted love you would reinstate with the treasures of your own heart, or will you proffer your gifts to that young lawyer's clerk without encumbrance ? There would be no revival in your yet young womanhood of a

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once pure and holy love when you again pledge your troth, your God-witnessed vow, that you will hold to him in sickness and in health, and, 'forsaking all other, keep only unto him.' But why pursue the vision?

God and Father of all, deliver us from the Evil One. Amen.

Nurse Lucretia's Immediate Antecedents.

Prior to her appearance in Catchemalivo Square, I have received authentic information, written and verbal, respecting Nurse Lucretia's immediate antecedents.

When residing with Lady U——, as nurse, she stole everything she possibly could remove without discovery at the time, damaging and destroying much valuable property in articles of vertu, notably one vase of rare and costly porcelain, cherished as a gift to Lady U—— on the occasion of her marriage. The household servants became instinctively alarmed by nurse's conduct, as ominous whisperings came to their ears. They locked her bedroom every night, lest she might visit them during

the hours of darkness. At last she quitted this situation, being compelled to leave without warning.


In her previous situation, as nurse in sole charge of an only child—girl, winsome and affectionate—she beat and otherwise ill-used the nursling, which needed no correction of its endearing charms. She always locked the door of the happy, playful, unprotected little lady, so as not to be interrupted in her nurse duties or interfered with by any servant. The door being unsecured on one such occasion, the mother, with perhaps her maternal apprehension aroused, entered the room, just in time to see nurse in the act of administering a spoonful of something from a saucer containing a reddish fluid. The poor little thing fell asleep, and remained so long insensible to mother's voice and awakening cries that it was feared she lay asleep to wake no more.

Whether this well-nigh fatal deed was done by the hand of a murderess, with some secret motive and purpose, or whether an overdose of medicine was administered by

the hand of an ignorant, 'untrained,' and 'uncertificated' nurse, is known only to Him who seeth in secret.

Certain, however, was the sequel, that Lucretia forthwith surrendered her charge of the little patient, and, without the least protest, consented to leave the house, but demanding (her old claim) a month's wages. Threatening the summons from a police-court, and the assistance of her legal friend (with whom the reader is acquainted), at once silenced the mother's demurrer. As a nervous lady, she dreaded her name appearing in the papers, and which would be 'equally distressing to nurse, a lady born, and well known to the magistrate.' The case was settled out of court, 'the mother of the hapless innocent agreeing to pay nurse's lodgings until she could recommence duty in another situation.'

Thus this head-nurse of the latest fashion disappears from our view.



CHAPTER II

THE HUSBAND-HUNTRESS AND TRAPPER NURSE

IN contrasted alliance with the inhuman species of woman, Satan in Petticoats, who is the exponent of the latest possibilities of nurse or nurse-attendant, I now introduce the reader to one who is morally very unfit for a heaven-born calling, and socially a very dangerous type of feminine nature, gaining admission into families—as a nurse—for the exercise of her art. That such is the way of the world with either sex does not ennoble and beautify the character of one who plays her part under cover of a dress and vocation which specially offer opportunities for her purpose.

See yonder sick and suffering wife ; her

husband in daily intercourse with Nurse Lovibond; she readily and rightly wins the heartfelt gratitude of him who sees in her ever-watchful attention and devoted care on behalf of the sufferer all the qualities of that womanhood which has blessed his own life, she who might replace a mother to his young children. Or, the only son of his mother—a widow—is attracted by the fidelity and womanly grace of one who nursed her in her lingering last illness—a vision of the woman who would share his fleeting joys of sunshine, support him in tempest-tossed hours of adversity, dispel the clouds of sorrow—in the loss, perhaps, of love's pledges, in sickness, God's nurse-messenger, and, forsaking all other, keep only unto him, until she receded from his longing eyes and holden hand to reappear in his first consciousness beyond the veil. In either of these cases, say you, what a divine union with father or son! Surely some such women, by their natural endowments and life training, are the truest of Eve's daughters, and have proved themselves the best wives. I am

certain that no such woman, in the vocation of a nurse, would be a disguised husband-huntress and trapper.

In a villa on the wild and weird coast of Tenby, in North Wales, a palsy-stricken lady rested during the last few years of her troubled way, with nothing true about her but the first beams of heavenly light in her soul, and a daughter of comfort and consolation. Husband, not a deserter, but absent by private 'deed of separation'; an only son, a drunken sot, etc., occasionally visited his invalid mother.

To be accurate with regard to their relationships, I may mention that the son was his father's, Mr. Goatman's, stepson, by his wife's former marriage. Mrs. Goatman, who was divorced from her (previous) husband in exceptionally painful circumstances, readily consented to her son's exchange of surname, which would thus to all the world conceal a wretched, a hideous past.

Her (present) husband, Mr. Goatman, as a stock-jobber, usurious money-lender, and bubble-company promoter, had amassed a

large fortune, increased by building investments, etc. He well knew how to keep that which he had thus gathered, without indulging his generosity for the benefit of others, apart from self-gratification as his motive.

If the love of money be the root of all evil in the soul, this passion would seem to be soul-destroying by first enthroning self, as the idol of worship, with all the mind, with all the heart, and with all the strength of the moral nature; extinguishing the love of self-sacrifice for others, as the true source and sustenance of the higher life, whereby whomsoever will lose his life shall find it; and he who would keep his life shall lose it. Thus had the greed for money killed the soul of its victim in the person of Mr. Goatman, the embodiment of selfishness.

Pride in a man on whom Nature had bestowed but little, and to whom education had given less, grew to perfection as wealth gave self-importance, and the world bowed to him. A little man in every sense, his strutting egoism gave him another surname than his own birthright—Goatman, *alias*

(Mr.) Puff; his affectation of *courage*, in a cowardly nature, conferred on him the title of Powder Puff; his impotent *rage* Powder Ball; his furtive *malice* no title but *one* of the reptilian species could suggest, nor his vindictively hating, unforgiving, and uncharitable nature. So there you have his picture in little, without some unexpressed touches of character to relieve the portraiture. Humanity never entirely loses its original image.

In an illness prolonged and tedious, passing into a pathetic imbecility, nurse-attendants on his poor wife came and went in succession. But the last such attendant, Nurse Lovibond, eclipsed all the previous sisters in her ministrations; for as they paid attention only to the wants of the restless invalid, our Nurse Nonpareil found time to extend her favours to one other, the witless boy-stepson, who, despite his personal demerits, possessed an overpowering attraction to her—money.

A young lady, tall, tender-eyed, and otherwise personally well-favoured, and equipped with more than the average of woman's sail,

and bottom-ballast of steadiness, would surely capture the ever-floundering craft of a young man who could never pull an oar, or steer his course in life, when pursued by a clever and experienced adventuress on the same ocean.

In the person of our present adventuress, it must be admitted that her methods were refined and delicate; all the more engaging to a young man who could the better appreciate a tone of character he did not himself possess. It is thus that the lowest and most depraved moral nature often experiences the refining influences of companionship and conversation, which the reading of healthy books would fail to impart. Character begets and moulds character by association. The drama teaches, not only by studying the pages which portray human life in its highest forms of virtue, or would correct vice in its unloveliness and repulsiveness; all the *dramatis personæ* must act and speak for themselves, as in life, to really and fully convey the lessons which the dramatist would teach. Even Shakespeare's most

living creations of character are dead, lifeless forms, as seen only in the plays he wrote; until, vivified by the true actor's art, they speak and move on the stage. Thus it is that Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Lear, with the accompanying types of feminine character, fulfil the teaching purposes of the drama, when rightly interpreted and impersonated. To return from this digression.


Mr. Alfred Goatman (*fls*) and Nurse Lovibond are sitting closely coupled together on a rock, under the cliff at Tenby, and as the lady draws thoughtless figures on the sand with the point of a sunshade, she pours her domestic history of pitiful privations and troubles into the ear of a sympathetic listener. A few sea-gulls perched on recesses in the adjoining cliff, or flapping their wings around the happy pair, are the only other depositories of her moving tale; and of his response whose heart was open to distresses, which in idle affluent circumstances he had never known. In their solitude I cannot record the climax until later on.

But as the true and proven friend of all

good nurses, in weal or woe, I may take this opportunity of briefly telling Mr. Alfred's life-story, as a warning to any other husband-hunting nurse in a family of whose members she may know no more than of Mr. Alfred's dark past. The husband-trapper may, perchance, herself be trapped.

Over the irrelevant chapters of Mr. Alfred's history Charity throws her purple pall. Educated to no profession or business, an idle man, otherwise than as a man of war by his own appointment, and an undecorated hero in a few bloodless reviews, he had become an accomplished nondescript, only less distinguished than his father, who was really a man of business. His poor *own* mother's prayers on her son's behalf—'I know that a mother's prayer *will* be heard'—had never been answered, apparently, for his career in this world.

A lounge in pubs and restorants, as he called these sometimes very needful places for refreshment, Mr. Alfred was a frequenter of one haunt, a music-hall (near the author's residence), where his close-cropped, convict-



looking head, simple, stupid face but for the restless, furtive eyes, and sharp up-to-date expression and talk, alike betoken the class of associates into which he had fallen. How many City clerks begin their descent into the pit of destruction hand-in-hand with some chum at the refreshment-bar of a music-hall. In justice to the higher character and management of music-halls which now prevail, the reference here made is to a former place of entertainment, whence the author's character sketch is drawn.


Mr. Alfred Goatman almost nightly visited this Temple of the Muses, where the comic man of song vied with the fair songstress in the vulgarity of their humorisms, and the ballet-girl, with shortened skirts, threw her legs up yet higher to the plaudits of the grosser groundlings behind the footlights. He knew all about the private life and habits of his favourite performers, whose special talents would never be tolerated on the stage of the theatre or concert-hall.

But Mr. Alfred was an equal devotee at the hall refreshment-bar. Behind the bar

stands the active and winsome, yet well-conducted, manageress of half a dozen servants of the sherries, brandies and sodas, and other liquids, with comestibles, which pass in rapid succession across the counter, and down the throats of the nightbirds on the other side.

As an habitu  , Mr. Alfred's acquaintance has grown into (quite proper) terms of intimacy with Miss Ettie. In their personal appearance the ill-starred couple present a striking contrast. He, in stature short, and with thick-set figure, his face blotched and battered by habitual potations; she, tall, with stately, commanding form, her handsome features crowned with a head bearing hair of raven-black colour, horrified by present-day fashion into a huge frizz in front and wrought behind into a mysterious mass. Had Nature been her hair-dresser, luxuriant tresses would have covered neck and shoulders which needed no concealment.

Mr. Alfred is telling the dark-eyed manageress all about his father, as his 'governor,' 'provider,' 'banker,' including his own ways and means, reversionary



interest, etc., also the beautiful place at Tenby. The young lady behind the bar, accustomed to such stories, is reticent and circumspect. But as dropping water at last hollows the hardest rock, so will the most wary woman be impressed at last by the dropping words of love from the mouth of a practised male linguist.

‘Now, what could artless Ettie do ?
She had na mind to tell him na ;
At length she breathed a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.’

Alas ! no.

A marriage, undiscovered for awhile by stepfather and the mother of her darling boy, was, nevertheless, in due time blessed by the birth of a girl-baby ; then a boy was born—both of whose characters, as they grew, have thus far done much to redeem an unhappy legal union.

We left the husband-trapper with her prey on the rock under the cliff, and trust by this time they have brought their stolen joys to an end. Fair Nurse Lovibond has hooked and landed Mr. Alfred ; but I am sure he will

soon slip out of her hand, for a very proper reason—she knew not the fish she had caught. On returning home to her nursing duties, a letter awaited her arrival from a lady friend in London. It appears that this friend went to a wholesale house in the City, supplying furs and mantles of a superior quality, and was served by another young lady who displayed to advantage a sealskin jacket on her graceful figure. Interested in the conversation of this lady show-woman, it transpired that she was married, and was now Mrs. Alfred Goatman. The young lady purchaser of the jacket or some other article remarked: ‘What an uncommon name! and you say Mrs. “Alfred” G. Why, at Bournemouth, I know a gentleman of that name, but he is unmarried.’

‘Oh!’ rejoined Mrs. Alfred, ‘my husband passes as a single man!’

Whereas in truth the Benedict was very much married.

And our lady-nurse husband-trapper had reckoned without knowing Alf’s paternity; as a stepson, he might not have inherited the

wealth with which she had credited him. Oh, gold, gold, gold ! thou hast most to answer for in this world's sad history from the beginning—excepting woman.

The announcement that Mr. Alfred was a married man having been made by letter to the lady-nurse who had caught him of the music-hall species, he was interviewed by the fair trapper. He coolly admitted the impeachment, simply remarking, ‘ Don’t I *look* like a married man ? ’ A rather mortifying challenge of the trapper’s skill, who at once let him escape to enjoy his married liberty and felicity.


But a once happy home—at least, in point of pecuniary circumstances—had now been broken up by Mr. Alfred’s habitual intemperance, with its usual combination, brutality ; reckless expenditure, culminating in a bill of sale, had swept away all personal effects, excepting the shabby clothes of the drunkard, but he retained the selfish privilege of stripping his wife and their two little children of every article almost of their covering of nature’s nudity. The ‘ governor,’ my

'banker,' the stock-jobbing father, with his superabundant means, had at last, kindly or unkindly, dishonoured the cheques drawn on his generosity, in excess of the ample allowance granted to his distinguished heir, whose 'account' closed, leaving his income swallowed up by hopeless debt.

Thus it came to pass that in the tender scene we have depicted on the rock, under cliff, the lady-nurse husband-trapper for a good round 'settlement' would have found only a simpering, blotched-face dipsomaniac, with a pocketful of pawn-tickets instead of sovereigns.

Nurse Lovibond resumed her duties of attendance on the old invalid lady with more singleness of purpose now that she was no longer preoccupied with the all-absorbing designs of captivating and capturing Mr. Alfred.

Nurse Lovibond would never have rivalled the author's sister Eva—the heroine of 'Perfect Womanhood'—for it was not in the nature of the self-seeking husband-trapper to be married to her high calling as a



messenger in mercy sent to the sick and afflicted. Hers was indeed a mission from which neither the temptations of wealth and rank in marriage would ever lure her; nor even the man of her heart, in the final struggle she underwent 'twixt love and duty—a struggle which, if once experienced, few women ever, and fewer men, can bear away from the conflict the palm of victory.


Our present lady-nurse heroine of another kind *performed* her duty more efficiently and faithfully when freed from the distraction of her former pursuit to find a man suitable at least for her purpose in marriage, who, whatever his personal qualification and social position might be, would be provided with a certain 'settlement' on her in this uncertain life.

As the end of the case drew near for the poor wife's release from long suffering, and the blighted faith of years, let us hope and believe that some restoration of conjugal affection and respect for manhood were felt by the departing spirit; that some words of reconciliation passed between her and her

husband, and that some lost appreciation of a truly good woman, wife and mother, awakened Mr. Goatman's dead soul, and somewhat redeemed his grievous errors in the past.

The funeral service over the remains of the deceased wife was performed in accordance with the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, of which she was a member; and the surviving partner to the contract 'until death us do part'—himself a nominal member of the Anglican Church, or simply a Christian unattached to any denomination—displayed a pathetic religiosity, as on the brink of the grave he took a last look of the tenement, bedecked with more emblems of love than were strewn on the aisle when he married his bride. 'Tis nearly fifty years since.

During this long period, although a husband's quarrels with his wife's family had helped to embitter her life, the feuds of years might well terminate at her graveside. Animosities, which have resisted the softening influence of time, have been reconciled, when the little group of relatives were



gathered around the lowering coffin, and they felt how much they all stood in need of forgiveness. Thus, death is one of God's methods of reconciling soul-destroying discords in the family life of His children, and of attuning them to the harmonies of heaven.


Mr. Goatman's implacable nature must have softened, or hardened, under the Divine influence. But when 'God hardened the heart of Pharaoh,' does it not signify that He withdrew the light and warmth of His presence in his soul, which then and thus became insensible or dead, even as the earth is frozen in the absence of life-giving sunbeams?

The lady-nurse, in the loss of her patient, loses also her situation. But she bears, it seems, a good character for faithful attendance and kind attention, and of having such knowledge as an 'untrained' nurse may have casually acquired. Cast upon the world to find her own way, and in her own way, she was not long in making, as she thought, a good venture. She would rent of Mr. Goatman the pretty and well-furnished residence

in which his wife had died, and convert it into a small sanatorium for invalid ladies and gentlemen. The air of Tenby is, perhaps, more generally salubrious than the climate of the Riviera. Mr. Goatman, with his large fortune, gladly let, at a nominal rental, a villa which recalled to him no happy memories.

In her new enterprise the lady-nurse tenant associated with her own disqualifications the 'trained' qualifications of a younger sister, a 'certificated' nurse. Not unlike in personal attractions, the two young ladies were bound to each other by a strong sisterly affection; but, differing in the inner woman, Nurse E. Lovibond shared not her sister's craft and design; under cover of *her* nursing vocation she would have scorned to captivate and capture any man in marriage. The elder sister—of whom we have yet to know more—had started her sanatorium with a double prescience: the possibility of its failure as a business speculation, and an ulterior view in that event.

At the end of a year the landlord, not seemingly a hard-hearted man, as he had



shown himself at his wife's grave, was unwilling to allow the fourth quarter to pass over without any payment — for business with him meant business — and he then gently reminded his fair tenant of her forgetfulness. She frankly confessed the failure of her enterprise, invalids coming and going, or leaving the place empty, as in other such resorts ; but Nurse Lovibond would willingly work out her rent in some other way.


Old Mr. Goatman had occasionally visited the sanatorium during the year, and had seen and admired the younger sister no less in view of her personal outfit, than that he saw in her also a woman to his taste as a business man—steady, and with singleness of purpose, as compared with the flippant, coquettish, love-making elder sister.

Mr. Goatman felt a sincere sympathy for the younger sister in the distressful failure of her efforts to make the sanatorium a success ; and to cut short any description of his prosaic proposal to relieve her anxiety as to what her future might be, he plainly proposed to offer her a home as his wife ! The

landlord-widower would thus cancel her *sister's* debt due to him as rent. In these circumstances the younger sister reluctantly accepted the offer of a new way to pay a heavy debt, which assuredly the rich landlord would not otherwise have cancelled, than by having his 'pound of (her) fair flesh.'

Meanwhile the elder sister had not forgotten her resource in the event of the sanatorium proving to be a financial failure. In an interview with the landlord she proposed to him her method of paying the rent, without incurring any further liability. She had heard that Mr. Goatman was in quest of a housekeeper, and she at once offered her service in that capacity. Her failure had not been owing to any ignorance of housekeeping; the sanatorium had not answered as a health resort. She had full confidence in her ability to conduct the internal arrangements of Mr. Goatman's large establishment at Tenby. What might be Nurse Lovibond's *ulterior* view in making this proposal, the reader of this story will shrewdly and surely guess.

In the final interview of Nurse Lovibond



with Mr. Goatman, he would have accepted her proposal to work out her rent—when she again pressed upon him her service—as his housekeeper. ‘But,’ said he, ‘there is just this difficulty: I am about to marry your sister, and it would hardly do for me to have you in my service, with your sister as my wife.’ Alas! the poor husband-trapper was foiled a second time, after her first adventure with Mr. Alfred G., the stepson — caught again in her own trap.


All tellers of tales, long or short, are expected to disclose some information as to the future of those who have played any conspicuous part in the narrative, just as it is expected of the dramatist not to be in a fix by having put certain characters on the stage, the manager in rehearsal having no directions given for getting them off.

Of our trio, the heroine—Nurse Lovibond—and Mr. Alfred Goatman alone linger behind. He visited the father and his second wife occasionally, to report himself of sane mind in a sound body. All kinds of alcoholic stimulants were banished from his view. He

had been whitewashed of his debts, and having been somewhat reclaimed of his besetting vice, and Ettie having stuck to him, rather than get a judicial separation, they and their children lived together in comparative happiness.

But what became of her who had trapped for a husband twice, and failed to catch either of them? Nurse Lovibond, of course, never again tried to establish a sanatorium. She returned to private practice. I have heard that she married a young doctor, which would take her out of practice. I cannot credit the report; for although I believe some doctors have found wives in nurses, and good wives, it would be incredible that any man having any knowledge of nurses would himself select one of Nurse Lovibond's species, or have been caught by her in marriage.

She visits her now married sister, Mrs. Goatman senior, from time to time; and on one of these occasions it so happened that Mr. Alfred Goatman, with his wife and children, were also on a visit to old Mr. Goatman and his wife. Thus all the parties



met in happy concord. One incident has reached me which may be worthy of record.


Nurse Lovibond would talk over old times with Mr. Alfred G., in drawing-room séances, and in one of these sittings she, whether unmarried or married, was as closely linked with him as when, seated on the rock at the sea-shore in former days, she would have captured a married man. His two children—boy and girl—in play burst into the room and disturbed them in their conversation. After this surprise, the said romps always found the door locked!

What may have been all the aptitudes which Nurse Lovibond possessed cannot be fully and fairly estimated, in addition to her personal gifts, which doubtless surpassed her qualifications as an ‘uncertificated’ nurse. She moved among the wealthier classes of society, or, as she expressed it, in good families. But, unfortunately, the public of that world more especially cannot distinguish between the true and the false species of nurse; while the personal gifts which society might value most—in charms of appearance,

manner, and conversation—are often such as would least qualify a woman to honourably, not to say religiously, fulfil her duties. Of strictly technical qualifications, the public can hardly be expected to know anything—nor of the Nurse Lovibond species.

THE BREACH-OF-PROMISE NURSE.

Among nurses who are by nature devotedly attached to the ‘service of humanity,’ not only in their nursing capacity, but with a special sex-affection for the patient to whom they minister—as angels in disguise—there are some such who cannot be classed with any of the species whose photographs I have already shown. A nurse or nurse-attendant of the species in view certainly has no kinship with ‘Satan in Petticoats,’ and would scorn to be a ‘husband-seducer’; she has some affinity with the ‘Husband-huntress and Trapper.’ As a ‘religious nurse,’ her Church, or Nonconformist, proclivities are not well marked or peculiar; though she may be a ‘good woman,’ and



certainly is religiously well conducted, and bears an irreproachable character.

Nurse Eider-down is personally as prepossessing as her name would suggest ; but also as warm-hearted, and susceptible of receiving and imparting warmth ; her Cupid's bower, even in the coldest weather, would assuredly never need the use of an artificial eider-down. But her individuality is, after all, but a product of Nature, and no defilement of womanhood.


The personal attractions embodied in Nurse Eider-down vary much ; for who can tell what Nature may do with her plastic hand to mould into feminine human beauty her 'blacks,' 'blondes,' and 'brunettes,' and other forms, for man's chief nourisher in life's feast ?

Nevertheless, the Eider-down species of woman is not a perfect type of her sex. Her susceptibility of ardent and true affection and power of captivating is fully equalled, nay, surpassed, by her resentment in losing the heart she has gained all so readily ; she may even imagine, with a light

and warmth all her own, that she has won that which she has never possessed, or in the circumstances could ever have been hers, and then her vindictive resentment is like the tigress-spring—sudden, quick, and cruel! What a compound of two natures in woman!

Thus, in such a species, an offer of marriage follows a slight acquaintance with Nurse Eider-down; or she interprets the overtures of a man's admiration and esteem in the light of an offering of himself at the altar of her heart; and an engagement of marriage, with the vow of betrothal, is a sacred bond of union in the registry of her soul. But the betrothed ought not, rightly, to have thus exercised her power, or her own heated imagination has befooled her; in either case she has betrayed the implied trust of her nursing vocation. She believes herself the betrayed, and with all the strength of her crushed womanhood brings a 'breach of promise' against the unhappy victim of herself.

Nurse Eider-down, invested with the



qualities of feminine character I have depicted, is, indeed, a most dangerous species of woman in her attendance upon most men, an invalid, eligible widower, or a son, to either of whom *she* may have been paying her addresses. Her 'breach of promise' is assessed by her claim for 'damages.'


Craft, such as some few women alone possess, may be another Nurse Eider-down; not, however, possessing the true womanly gifts of her fair sister.

I am informed by a well-known London surgeon that, in the case of one of his patients, an elderly damsel-nurse, on quitting her attendance, laid the grief of her broken heart before the parents of a young man—and heir—for his having cruelly broken faith with her. At her age (æt. 60), the victim assessed her loss at proportionately heavy damages. Whether the threat of exposure settled this case out of court, or that the heir being already engaged to a young lady of his own station in Society suggested to the elderly nurse-lover the moral improbability of her sad story, duly appreciating, moreover, the

balance of evidence otherwise, in her virginal appearance to support her claim against her faithless young lover, the parties to the suit never appeared in court !

THE WIDOW NURSE.

Experience of human life, and of home life in particular, with its outcoming formation of character, must surely be a special equipment for women, in addition to their technical training, for attendance on the sick. It is thus that, whilst ministering to the wants of the body in all the varied conditions of illness and disease, the nurse experienced in her knowledge of human nature can best appreciate the mental needs and social or family surroundings of the patient, who is brought into such intimate association with herself. The past, the present, and the probable future, of the inner life of her, or him, she nurses is disclosed to her confiding care, involving much discretion, good judgment, and moral rectitude—not to say religious principle—on her part, with proportionate responsibility in the fulfilment of her mani-



fold duties. She may have to tend the morally weak-minded, say, young man; and then the tone of her own character should enable her to fulfil the promptings of her own heart, in helping the weak one, in raising up him who would fall, and in beating down Satan under his feet. A vital part of woman's mission on behalf of man would thus find its representative in the (ideal) nurse.

The married woman, therefore, were it not for the claims of her own domestic life, or the widow, might be thus more nearly a model nurse, than the unmarried, and probably younger, woman, who may have had little or no experience of human nature beyond her training—to tend the mere embodiment of the soul.

A parallel case of partial unfitness may be seen in the person of the (unmarried) young lady deaconess, who, herself on the threshold of life's vicissitudes and trials, which she has never experienced, is appointed by the Church office she holds to take part in the rescue of fallen women.

The 'Widow Nurse,' adequately trained and certificated *before* marriage, is entitled to resume her work as widow, with every guarantee of her *former* qualifications and character.

On the other hand is the widow who, without home or means of subsistence, is driven by social circumstances to get her living somehow. She forthwith calls herself nurse or nurse-attendant, she dons some becoming nursing dress, and cannot be distinguished from the trained and certificated sisters with whom she competes—*unfairly*, perhaps, with personal advantages all her own. A more womanly woman, it may be, and motherly fitted, youthful though she be, is that *young* widow nurse to take care of that young man, stricken down by timely illness, and to learn its lesson in the midst of 'sowing his wild oats.'

But association and opportunity are waves on the ocean of life which carry the best of us we know not whither—even the good young widow nurse included ; she drifts helplessly with the tide.

Not to draw a little picture of human nature in the circumstances, which many readers will be able to do perhaps better than the author, a real or imaginary or an *assumed* attachment springs up betwixt the young widow nurse, so named, and her young, or *old, charge*, culminating in a marriage, to which social incompatibility, or Dame Nature, would offer just cause and impediment !

The untrained, uncertificated widow nurse, who when 'on duty' finds a husband, or threatens a 'breach of promise,' is a nurse of quite the latest fashion.

CHAPTER III

WHO BEGAN IT?

THE reader who has learned to apprise the personal merits and accomplishments of the devil in petticoats, who as nurse or nurse-attendant has contrived to gain admission to the chamber of the sick and the household, who has also followed the husband-huntress and trapper in her nursing business, possessing attractions and qualifications all *her own*—the reader having this advanced knowledge in studying the possibilities of womankind to be found in Nurseland, will be prepared for introduction to an allied rival of the latest fashion.

That husband, recovering from a long illness, through which he has been taken by the hand of a skilled and faithful nurse; that

confiding wife, her heart filled with overflowing gratitude to her who, in fulfilling the duties of a beneficent calling, has restored the well-nigh lost one to the rightful owner's arms and to the home circle—each and all alike ought to know and appreciate at her full worth the nurse of another species who may be in their midst.

It was my professional privilege to become acquainted with quite a typical representative of this nurse species, who, with the nurse-attendants whose characters I have already sketched in portions of their life-history, might be designated 'Perfect Womanhood Reversed.'

Called down to Twickenham, near Richmond, Surrey, to do an operation for the cure of a common but lingering surgical complaint in the lower region of the body, a young woman as nurse awaited my arrival with the anæsthetist to render the patient insensible to an otherwise painful procedure.

The patient, a silversmith in the City (London), with a partner-nephew, known as (Mr.) Podgers and Son, had been very suc-

cessful in business. By the plodding industry of a shrewd matter-of-fact man, Mr. Podgers had built up a large 'pile,' as he called his fortune, with a conceit which in the person of a commonplace man is almost inseparable from financial success. He now resided in an elegant villa, within its own grounds, at Twickenham. The wife of the owner of this little domain, herself an invalid for some months past, resided, on that account, at another villa on the coast of Bournemouth; but she, as her health allowed of the journey, visited her husband, he, as business permitted, repairing occasionally to the seaside domicile for a few days. Thus much to introduce the reader to this couple.

The husband now lying in bed, of course Mrs. Podgers' anxious solicitude had brought her to his side. The operation, with nurse's assistance, quite sufficient for the purpose, had a speedy and successful result, usual in such cases. Afterwards the wife's visits at intervals were discontinued as the patient gained convalescence. The nephew, alias 'son,' also regularly went up to the City

by early business train, returning in the evening.

Daily the grateful patient and nurse were thrown much together in happy intercourse. Oft would she beguile him of otherwise lonely hours with the story of the few years when, emerging from the truly pathetic surroundings of her childhood, she, at eighteen years of age,* had entered as a probationary nurse at one of our large Metropolitan hospitals, leaving at the termination of a two-years period 'uncertificated.' In the course of five years since she had passed, poor girl! through the chequered experiences of an occupation which cannot fit in with any other. Since commencing private nursing she had learnt much more of human nature and things in general. In personal appearance she presented few charms otherwise than a robust yet well-proportioned figure and bosom, surmounted by a head of luxuriant yellow hair,

* Nurse-training commences at a more mature age than formerly, twenty-three or twenty-five years, and the period of training is extended to not less than three years for a 'certificated' nurse.

searching hazel eyes, an unmeaning nose, a large succulent mouth, disclosing pearly-white false teeth ; a face of no refinement, and not by nature given to win any man of culture or an admirer of the æsthetic in woman. Such is Nurse Washer, alias Yellow Poppy, so named by sister nurses. But tastes differ widely. To our unæsthetic man of business, whose heart was fraught with gratitude for her services, and moved by pity, akin to love, she may—nay, must—have appeared to *him* just the woman who surpassed his model wife in outward and inward perfections.

‘Truth that’s brighter than gem,
Trust that’s purer than pearl—
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe—
All were for him—in the kiss of one nurse.’

There can be no direct evidence of that which is known only to the parties immediately concerned, and circumstances are but indirect evidence which may not be conclusive. So here we leave the question, without a verdict, until the final day of judgment.

The day arrived for nurse’s departure ;


indeed, to say the truth, both wife and son began to think that father had better return to business. I, who had for some time discontinued visiting a convalescent patient, had discharged nurse at the earliest opportunity, having been restrained only by obvious professional caution from offering my advice to a dapper little man, surcharged with conceit, who imagined that no woman could approach him without danger to *her* peace of mind.

The victim of the nurse's attentions, herself 'on duty,' was a man of slender pretensions to win the heart of any true woman, but one who would be readily caught by the tongue and the mouth of a suitable female seducer—in this case of a husband. Quite an exceptional Adonis, an exceptional nurse-Venus.

Imagine a little man-formed specimen of manhood of middle age; a polished bald head, like a globe: his hair has all, excepting a coronal fringe, fallen down to his chin and upper lip; a low, retiring forehead; a pair of deep-sunk, furtive eyes; a nose of Hebrew

origin ; a mouth thick, spongy-lipped, pouting. Behind, the aspect of his bodily conformation is that of a blue-bottle ; chest less developed than the parts below, supported by podgy lower extremities, with arms above to match ; a tubby little man with off-shoots. This little creature, shrewd enough with his invoices, bills, etc., is otherwise dull-minded and soulless ; the flowerets of the heart are scanty or withered ; but having a decided amorous disposition, and a vanity which could never be overfed, he is just the homunculus to be a woman's dupe. Yet he is a dangerous prey ; for although Nature has been unmindful of intellect, when that article was served out, cunning, jealousy, and suspicion are ever vigilant, and a dogged determination when once he has made up that thing he calls his mind, with an implacable, unmerciful revenge, he would prove to his captor the prize she had gained in exchange for herself, a nurse of the latest fashion.

The partner-son in business was cast in father's mould, but wrought by the hand of surroundings and associations the sire had



never experienced, chiefly in 'the City.' An equally commonplace (young) man with regard to the higher qualities of (young) manhood, his dull-minded nature was not accompanied with the conceit and cunning of the elder bird, and his belief that his call could gather any number of hens, married or single, around him. Nor had the younger cock-bird developed those lower propensities which the elder cock possessed by nature, or had acquired by experience, say, of a nurse-seducing husband. Father and son alike were thus unlike.

But the younger bird of gayer plumage possessed accomplishments all his own. A horse-race bettor, a petty card-gambler, a billiard-player, and so forth, the chick quite out-rivalled 'Dad' Podgers, a bygone product in these moving times. Nevertheless, Son Podgers would have been quite as easily caught had nurse employed her ways and means.

I can only suppose that Nurse Poppy preferred to bestow her favours of tongue and mouth on old dad, with less prospect

of any *material* evidence of her partiality ; or, in that event, with the security that, to prevent a 'separation' from the wife, he would make provision both for the material product and the (joint) producer, the infant and its mother as a 'mistress.'

As we have seen, Nurse Poppy quitted her 'duty,' leaving no apparent impression on dad's little mind ; but his concealed remembrance of the absent one could not be effaced, and at his earnest request, willingly granted, there was an entry in his pocket-book of a certain address.

Before leaving the service of Mr. Podgers she had also told him a sad story of his son-partner in business, which in time was retold to the surgeon who had been called from London to make father a man again.

With grief and indignation Nurse Poppy had informed the father-patient of how his son would have disgraced himself, as well as her, in circumstances which she had hitherto concealed, not to wound the heart of his father and her benefactor. When, in hours

off 'duty,' in the evening, she repaired to the dining-room for rest, or she went into the garden for relaxation, seated on the lawn and viewing the Twickenham landscape, lit by mellow moonbeams, how in that soft hour the sapient son was sure to be found in either locality! and, oh, how often would he try, and fail, to take advantage of her, an unprotected woman! Often had nurse resolved never again to place herself thus in the way of his grasp; but she knew that soon, on leaving, she should be thus insulted by him no more, and only felt it part of her duty to acquaint the father, lest any other nurse should be subject to such improprieties of conduct. I dare say young Podgers may have done something in his clumsy way when wrought in the extreme.

The father's jealous rage was kindled; he warmly thanked nurse for the caution she had given him, and which he would exercise on his son's behalf for the future. But such is the moral blindness of vice, his own guilt never once awakened him, conscience-stricken for the perfidious part he himself had played

ever since nurse's tuition by *her* first kiss
'on duty.'

A domestic story scarcely lends itself to the telling, for who can tell it with an approach to fulness of detail, authentic and authorized?

Is the parochial clergyman or pastor of any Church denomination the depository of family history, secrets, and personal life? or does the High Church cleric or Roman Catholic priest, with the confessional, know all?

The clergyman admits an infant into the Church of Christ, visible and invisible, marking the neophyte's forehead with an imperishable sign of the cross, in token of such membership, and conferring a name or names, bound by two sureties, as a further testimony, through life and in death, of its perpetuity; this ceremony being the only outward visible sign that the child is reborn spiritually from out of the old Adam, of sinful and corrupt nature. The aforesaid two sureties bind themselves and are bound by the clergyman's authority on behalf of the



unconscious infant in arms to ratify this deed of Church-membership, with its consequent privilege and blessings, as soon as the member can comprehend the nature of the act; the sponsors meanwhile pledging themselves to take care of the new offspring's spiritual education until he or she will confirm what they as sureties have further promised for him. A very reasonable Christian rite is Baptism, just as an infant might by witnesses lay his claim to some rich and vast estate.

The clergyman himself superintends the early spiritual education of the little Christian, in parish school or domestic homestead, and is the rightly trustworthy counsellor of father and mother. Marriage, with its God-witnessed life-partnership, removes the son or daughter from any further supervision of a human life, under new conditions and associations, perhaps in some distant locality.

In illness, trouble, or sorrow, there remains an often unfailing friend in the clergyman, to comfort, advise, or sympathize, so far as

the *heart* may be laid open to *him*, or he can penetrate its inmost recesses, or see the skeleton of misery hid out of sight.

In death he renews his beneficent office at the bedside, a spectator of all that is visible; but the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal. At the grave this life-long friend, with his dark knowledge of the departed, with tearful eye and tremulous voice, commits the 'remains' to the earth of which they are part in sure and certain *hope*, etc.

Then comes the lawyer, who may have done much business for his client, or have done very little; may have often dined with the family and danced the children on his kindly knee; and now, as one of the executors, he administers the will, to the entire satisfaction of children, relatives, and friends, or to their surprise and consternation, which he does not share, knowing something more of the mind, the character, and the doings of the departed one from this world, than even the most knowing and far-seeing old clergyman friend of the family.

The doctor completes the trio of these most intimate friends. He was present at the birth and baptism of every child in the family. He has attended mother, and brought her, humanly speaking, through the pains and perils of every child-birth. He, too, has danced, one after another, the little prodigies on his knee, asked them conundrums, has always something in his pocket to surprise and delight them, and as they grow somewhat older he enters into all their nursery games, even lying on the floor that they may jump over him—in convalescence from illness a healthy exercise, perhaps more conducive to recovery than any of the doctor's medicinal resources. The children love 'doctor' almost better than Ma or Pa, and who is the fond mother that does not love, in the truest sense, him who loves her own, and has 'delivered' her at the time of their birth? What fond father does not love him to whom he owes so much, and who gives his loving kindness in return to all alike? Yes, the family doctor is *the* friend—indeed, the most intimate, trusted, and con-

tinuous in the home, at times eclipsing the kindly presence of both clergyman and lawyer.

But if such be the professionally domestic picture of the past or present-day family doctor, he also mostly possesses technical qualifications and experience of a high order, which he exercises in his daily rounds of general practice.

Yet does the doctor know the *life* story which would never be divulged to the clergyman in the confessional, and not a trace of which is to be found in the will drawn up by the family lawyer?

Can the doctor discern who is the father or mother of the children in the family group? At any time has he seen hovering over them the spectre of divorce, suicide, murder?

Does he, the doctor, know him, the father with whom he has been intimate all these years—who that man really is? Can the doctor tell by sight whether the 'father' belongs to another family of the same surname? Or that he is the son by a former

marriage? Or the first-born of his father before marriage—an illegitimate son?

To pursue this inquiry further as to who the man is bearing the name of Podgers would be fruitless. His wife even cannot tell you, nor the nephew adopted as son.

Who, then, is Podgers? Any *attentive* reader of this book can answer the query. And who is the nurse-heroine? The *same* reader knows.

To resume the domestic story of Dad Podgers after nurse's departure from her patient in the Twickenham villa.

He knew—in fact, provided—her address in London. But so does many a patient know of nurse's whereabouts on quitting a case, for mutual convenience in the event of any subsequent need of her service.

I would fain tell the remainder of this story with the pathos which marked its progress in the home, and the misery of the climax. But the vanity of person and the stupid cunning which ever guided the footsteps of Mr. Podgers senior presented him in an irresistibly comic light to

others, of which he was himself wholly unconscious.

He had the highest sense of the obligation which bound his future wife to him during their engagement; so much so that when her father, mother, sister and brother—the whole family—would have rather seen the engaged one in her coffin than allow of the marriage, the little business man wrote a letter to the whole bench of Bishops, requesting them, on his behalf, to state their opinion as to the legality of such breach of promise, and spoliation of her to whom *he* had given his hand and heart! I know not whether the Bishops took up such an important case against the family. But, as he said, he persevered in his wooing—‘not that he cared much for her,’ but, ‘you know, I was always rather a proud chap.’

After nurse’s overture to dad, the sanctity of the marriage vow underwent a sad depreciation of value in the judgment of her victim. He hunted up all that he could find in the Bible relating to the bond of wedlock, without, however, again consulting his Right

Reverend counsellors, as on the occasion of the engagement question. At last he found that Scriptural authority which met his present case exactly. 'You see St. Paul—writing on this very question of marriage—says that, among the qualifications befitting a Bishop, *he* shall be the husband of *one* wife, plainly declaring that a Bishop alone may have one such possession—that he alone shall thus be bound in marriage. I, therefore, am free from the yoke which burdens the Right Reverend Prelate. But,' Mr. Podgers would add, 'a Bishop has much else to be thankful for ; he can bind or loosen.'

Our little man of business still kept his regular habit of going up to the City every morning, returning in the evening to dinner-time, punctually ; but somehow he began to relax in the latter regularity of habit. He always gave the explanation to his wife that business was very heavy just now, or that he had just missed catching the train. What more probable occurrence to a very busy man ? Sometimes also, when the carriage was at the door of his suburban villa, at the

top of the drive, the little man, ever so punctual to catch the up-train, was not quite ready to depart; he was busy with the gardener in the stable, while his wife remained in the hall to give him her customary kiss, as a blessing for the business of the day. Then, again, when about to step into his carriage, he had forgotten something in the stable, or to give some direction to the gardener about annuals on a beautiful spring morning, or roses in the summer season. 'There, my dear, I need not keep you standing in the hall: I will just run round to the garden entrance to the house,' albeit he would lose the usual conjugal kiss.

One day when he made this *détour* through the garden she remained in the hall—with what motive I cannot divine—but she beheld the little man coming from the stable yard, followed by the gardener; both were freighted, Dad carrying a hamper of choice fruit and other produce, the faithful gardener, with his blue apron tucked up, bearing a large basket of flowers, veiled by a covering of thin tissue paper. The poor wife, with clasped uplifted

hands, mildly inquired, 'Where are those things going to?' 'A good customer,' dad replied, without a quiver. He had undergone some training by this time in the art of lying like truth.

So the carriage drove off, and the wife repaired to the drawing-room, locked the door, and sobbed her heart out to relieve her burning throat. She was not oppressed with rage, but with mortification and grief. With a woman's instinct, she somehow connected many little incidents in reference to what she had just witnessed, and a vision of 'dear Nurse Poppy' appeared to her. But she kept all this retrospect to herself and pondered it in her heart. How bitterly she realized the prognostications of evil to come when warned by her father, mother, sister, and brother! None of her family had ever once seen her chosen one since the day of their happy union. For this she had forsaken all others to cleave only unto him; for this she had married the little bantam-cock, when no other hen would cross his walk.

Had his wife imparted her suspicion to

dad about 'dear nurse,' it is just possible that she might have set free the captive from the net of a designing woman who had caught the vain little creature. He might have been extricated, either by the merciful hand of his own better nature, or his wife might have been to him what a true woman always can be, and is—her husband's best friend. But, then, what true woman ventures to openly accuse her husband of treacherous perfidy foreign to her own honest, faithful nature?

Probably it was the basket of flowers, rather than the hamper of fruit, that had aroused her suspicion, for no man would present flowers to another man. This floral tribute of man's admiration had set in motion the delicate machinery of thought and feeling in woman's mind, followed, in her case, by mortification and grief.

Of course, dad, having noticed the expression of surprise as she stood in the hall when the carriage drove off with love's offerings, never again presented any such garden produce 'to a customer.'

Time wore on, and as no outward sign or symbols of dad's misdoings—nay, criminality—were renewed, seen only by the eye of One who is ever present, in all places, at all times, and who knows the inner life of each human being, the pure and healthy mind of the trustful wife recovered from the wound which the inner woman received, even as the pure and healthy flesh soon heals, leaving scarcely a scar to mark the part which had been injured.

It was a lovely midsummer evening. Nature seemed at the height of her rejoicing that her Spring had brought forth a daughter now so beauteous in blushing modesty from the apparently sterile womb of Winter, and ere the damsel herself, impregnated by an unseen Presence, should herself bear fruit in a thousand rich autumnal forms of produce from her person, as glad-some offerings to her Lord. No erring wantonness with the Spirit of Evil ever dishonours *their* happy union.

The family—father, mother and son (nephew)—were at dinner, and had now

arrived at that period of the prandial repast when dessert on the table offered to them some of Nature's choicest produce in fruit and flower. The silver épergne in the middle of the table, bearing June's blushing roses, was surrounded with baskets of strawberries, and each seemed to vie with the other in their appeal to the eye for admiration. Father and son were attracted by the charms of huge, luscious strawberries. Dad's wife, if not insensible to these proposals, silently admired the blushing roses, only looking a little saddened by having been plucked from the sweet society of their fair sisters, after disporting themselves in their morning bath of heaven's dew.

The door-bell rung with unwonted demand for an immediate answer. It was an unusual time for any call by visiting friends, but they had all heard the rumble of a carriage, and *one* had chanced to see a station fly as it passed up the winding laurel-bounded drive which led to the house.

A lady, bearing a bundle in her arms, appeared in the hall, and a voice, heard in

the dining-room, spoke with more volubility than elegance of diction.

Who can possibly be calling at this hour?

‘Not at home,’ quoth dad.

‘Certainly not,’ rejoined his spouse.

Butler opens the dining-room door as if with some urgent message not to be denied.

‘Please, sir, someone requests to see you immediately.’

‘Say that I never see anyone at home after business hours.’

‘But it’s a lady, sir, and she *won’t go*.’

‘Oh, I will see her,’ the wife said, rising from her chair to pass into the hall.

‘Non—non—no, my dear,’ interposed little dad. ‘I will go.’

But his wife was first in the hall, to behold ‘dear Nurse Poppy,’ bearing a small bundle in her arms, which might have been a parcel of lint when she was in their service


A small squeaky cry, a movement in the bundle, and then an infant’s face, bespoke the contents of that little parcel.

The nurse-mother had called after one of the many quarrels which mar the happiness

of these illicit amours—the ‘mistress,’ with all the sheer malice of such a woman, who really cares nothing for a man but what she can get in the way of allowance, jewellery, etc., and dead herself to any sense of honour, decency, or womanly feeling to spare a wife’s shame and humiliation, if her heart feels not the bitterness of broken faith. All is lost in the mistress-woman, who is the embodiment of the Spirit of Evil to torture both its victim and the innocent one whom she has sacrificed for hellish, self-seeking purposes.

By this time the whispering entreaties of dad’s voice, and the broken tremulous utterances of his wife, had drawn the son into the hall. *He* at once remembered the familiar yellow-haired, large-mouthed visage of ‘dear nurse,’ scarcely repressing a chuckle when he beheld her who had seduced his father, and remembering her sportive attentions to himself when out of dad’s sight. The little stranger was a special object of interest to the (adopted) son and heir.

At first old dad protested his innocence. Then, bit by bit, the truth came out, but



with the usual admixture of guilty falsehood. In his first version this 'wicked woman' was *not* the nurse who had attended him during his illness. No; resembling her in appearance, or very like her—in fact, almost identical, this brazen image of evil he remembered as a poor 'lost woman' whom he had accidentally met somewhere in Piccadilly. She had engaged him in conversation, and as their talking long together—old dad and a frail, fair daughter of Eve—would attract the observation of any friend passing by, he hailed a cab, and they both went in that device for continuing the interesting story of her young life. He ascertained her address, which she frankly gave him. Then, said he, that is *not* the direction in which he was going for the evening down-train to his home. Then, however, he remembered that her address *was* in that direction. But at last, halting 'twixt virtue and vice, he gave her a sovereign, got out of the cab, and bid her adieu, and had never seen her since.

The 'Piccadilly Pet'—so named by one old clubbiter, from her domestic, fondling nature—

whose claims in the vast sisterhood of feminine humanity society had ignored, was not unworthy of what Dad Podgers called a 'nest in his heart,' if compassion had been his feeling.

But old dad's expositions and expostulations to his wife fell upon a deaf ear. The apparition of 'that woman' in the hall had entered into her very heart and soul, and ejected her husband from the citadel of her love and faith for ever. She remarked, however, 'Perhaps there are two.' And she may have lived in that belief; she cared not. When a true woman's confidence in her marriage is betrayed, life has no more to bring but remembrance of the past.

The nurse had accomplished her womanly purpose of disgracing poor Mrs. Podgers, at her home, in her presence, and confronted by the dumb witness, little Podgers. She gave eyesight proof of her victory over him in the person of the squeaking little bundle in her arms. She owed no grudge against old dad—in fact, she rather liked him, or his amorous nature; and he had a decided penchant for the

yellow-haired, large-mouthed, full-bosomed young woman, with a grateful recollection of her truly kind, and not unskilled, nurse-attendance upon him. He would have treated her liberally in any 'allowance' he had made for any *service* she had rendered, and in the event of any contingency. The ex-nurse, quite satisfied with the feat she had achieved, re-entered the station fly, and by train returned to London.

'Perhaps there are two,' the explanation which Mrs. Podgers put upon old dad's blundering story about the Piccadilly young lady, was correct—another instance only among a thousand others of woman's prescience in matters touching connubial life, its rights and sanctities.

On a day never to be forgotten in Podgers' little life-history he had met a forlorn, wandering female—alas! how many in London!—and he had escorted her to her home, as she vainly called her lodgings, with her flower-pots and canary-bird, recalling other days not long since. True, also, she bore a remarkable resemblance to nurse in personal

appearance and the tone of her moral nature. In fact, it is more than probable that what ever there was in Nurse Washer, or 'Poppy,' which had gained possession of little Podgers had also won his stupid head and fickle heart in the person of this second captor. Strange, too, as it may appear, yet not strange in human nature, that the new charmer was also herself a nurse-fallen-angel—a 'Nurse Popsy.' The consequences of that first and fatal kiss 'on duty' had proved the far-reaching and momentous import of conduct—as entailing unforeseen happiness or misery when the blossom has borne fruit—for perhaps the remainder of a life.

I could relate the story of another nurse, whose method of first luring a middle-aged gentleman-patient was, perhaps, original in its suggestiveness. She was wont to charge his pipe, light it, and then, drawing a few whiffs with her mouth, transfer it—the pipe—to his lips, with a taste of her own flavour.

Podgers' story, if it were fully told in connection with the Piccadilly mishap, would

be replete with the tragico-comical and the comico-tragical.

He took a house for his second and contemporaneous mistress in a London suburb not remote from St. John's Wood, as it then was, almost rural. A neat little semi-detached villa, with a larger garden than any of the neighbouring villas, having shaded walks, etc. There he was wont to repair, singing in his heart, 'How happy can I be with either!' But Nurse Popsy pined in thought during his absence, for, despite the disparity of years—twenty-five and sixty-five—gratitude, which is the last honest feeling to die in woman's heart, moved her to treat her benefactor as a 'good, kind father to her.'

Yet an insatiable love of dress and jewellery, which characterizes all 'mistresses,' was a passion in her bosom which never could be gratified. Her desire, and at last her demand, for an ample 'allowance' grew up to £700 a year, which in addition to rent and the afore-said personal perquisites, besides theatre and concert stalls, taxed the pocket of even the

opulent silversmith. An elegant brougham and victoria *she* provided out of her allowance. Yet, while Podgers' business-head sometimes buttoned up, as it were, one pocket, his conceit in having such a young and attractive paramour, as he saw her, opened the other pocket freely. One of his morbid sensual feelings was to make arrangements that whenever he took his lawful spouse to any entertainment in London, the unlawful usurper should be there also. In an opposite box he could thus feast his eyes on the 'mistress,' with the strange satisfaction of feeling that he possessed her of whom his wife knew not, while sitting right before her eyes, and that he still enjoyed her wifely affection and unsuspecting confidence. On another occasion he would contrive that, say, in theatre stalls he should sit 'twixt wife and (nurse) mistress, with the yet higher, or lower, gratification of knowing that he had thus brought close to him, on either side of his body, wedded love and carnal passion. What a morbid compound of man and beast—to find no other name—does illicit sexuality

produce in its captive ! At times, when his dormant conscience awakened to 'know himself,' with a sigh would he whisper aloud : 'How shall I be damned for this !' or again : 'This is one of the things that makes the thought of a death-bed terrible :' for as he mused he added the sapient truism : 'There can be no *future* without the knowledge of a *past*.'

A day's holiday in the City always taxed Podgers' fertile cunning how to excuse himself from passing it with his wife, and how to explain his whereabouts when absent from home. A short journey to some hotel out of London, or, perhaps, to one of many secluded spots he knew, where they had met before, enabled the nurse-mistress to be at the time appointed with her paramour. *Al fresco* they lunched together, and reclined under many a hedge, he with the feeling of boyhood, that a stolen apple is sweeter than a bought one which cost no trouble to get, and the one is not his own.

The story runs, that upon one of these furtive enjoyments, his wife's carriage passing

a field where lay two figures, clearly male and female, beneath the umbrageous shade of a wide-spreading beech-tree, little Podgers' alert eyes catching sight of what he had never dreamt of seeing, he quickly threw over his face a white pocket-handkerchief, the lady by his side looking dumfounded at this act of concealment from her charms. Podgers presently explained who was the occupant of that carriage she had never beheld before. These outings were timed so that Podgers should always return home by the dinner-hour as if nothing had happened, he having visited some friend with whom he had important business transactions. But to explain away what his wife had seen that day well-nigh overtaxed the ingenuity of the little culprit. So they sat at the dinner-table in almost unbroken silence.

‘A very fine day for the holiday folks,’ was the wife’s indirect way of getting an explanation, which Podgers, scenting afar off the purport of her remark, seemed quite eager to offer.

‘Well,’ he rejoined, ‘but, after all, it rained

a short distance from London when I called on a friend, and so I remained to luncheon.'

Presently, in order to account for his whole day's occupation, he continued: 'I should have returned home earlier, dearest, but—but for the rain.'


'Then you have had *two* luncheons to-day, which accounts for your loss of appetite for dinner.'

'Who? I?' quoth Podgers. 'No, only one lunch; and, indeed, I am now very hungry, if you will only leave me alone to enjoy my dinner.'

'Then,' said Mrs. P., whose inquiry was getting rather hot, 'I must have seen someone exactly like you—a second self—under a tree, with a lady by his side, having lunch on the grass, as I happened to drive past in the carriage to visit a friend, Miss P., whom I had not seen for some time, thinking that perchance I might find her at home.'

This incident seemed to supply little Podgers with a cue to his own whereabouts.

'Ah, you seeing me under a tree may be readily explained.'



‘How so?’ inquired Mrs. P. ‘But there, probably it was a case of mistaken identity.’

Podgers might have availed himself of this escape, but human nature in lying usually tells *half* the truth.

‘Stay! I did call at a lady’s house; and as she was lunching under a tree in the meadow, I joined her—as you chanced to see me.’

O Podgers, were you reclining or squatting with your plump posteriors on the *wet* grass?

In a moment the additional lie came to his lips:

‘But the lady was only your sister-in-law, my sister, Mary Podgers.’

‘There are two,’ verified Mrs. P.’s prescience in the case of the faithless Podgers.

What became of this second nurse-‘mistress’ in the little life-story of one man?

For a woman to take the place of another woman—without possessing her claims and rights—as a ‘wife’ is the last degradation which false womanhood can undergo. She is worse than the poor unfortunate, who holds no such false position of wifely substitution. It may be that a woman, as a mistress, has




drifted into this false position, and insensibly lost the keen sensitiveness of true womanly nature, ere she can consent to dishonour her sex in herself.

Even when ranking among the gayest of her fallen sisters, she associates only with a few women of her own sort, as faithless to the honour of womanhood. Her relatives, however poor, yet honest, know nothing of her or where she lives. Her days are passed in almost solitude, save for the companionship of one or two servants, whose lives are as shady as her own, and whose society is more contaminating than that of the mistress. She may not be visited by any other man, the code of honour restraining acquaintance, which certainly would be perilous to her.

Thus immured, during lonely hours a hazy sense of her social degradation begets reflection of happy days with 'mother,' and other family associations which can ne'er return, while her future is precarious in the event of death or abandonment throwing her on the world in misery, and perchance without provision.

In these circumstances the 'mistress' commonly takes to drinking and amusements to dispel the 'blue devils.' She is mostly too illiterate to find any loss of self unless in some trashy novel, up-to-date, which she knows only too well as a woman of the latest fashion.

Age prematurely lays its withering hand upon her, despoiling her beautiful face with hard lines, and the furrows of a broken if not contrite heart. She may be an old woman some years before forty summers have separated her from the summer joys of home and childhood. She lingers on, smitten by some fatal disease, consequent, perhaps, on habitual intemperance. Old Podgers' solicitude provides her with the best medical advice in vain. Seaside, Riviera, Switzerland, are tried in succession. But everything else has been done to kill the body and the soul. The death-bed offers an impressive lesson to anyone who can read aright the punishment of transgression as touching the moral and the physical laws of human life, without viewing it from the higher stand-point



of religious obligations and responsibilities ignored.

The nurse-mistress Popsy mutters something about Podgers, and some broken words about his wife's forgiveness of her, followed by a few tremulous lip movements without sound. The bedstead, which could tell its tale, is sinking from under her, the room swims round, and then recedes from her view. She dies.

Podgers contrives to attend her funeral, unknown to his wife. There is no other mourner than an old woman, who has put in an appearance as 'aunt,' and the two servants, who look very sad, and certainly shed tears copiously.


In the old church, Hornsey, now closed up, there is a slab bearing the words : ' We shall meet again.'

CHAPTER IV

THE 'UNFORTUNATE'

OF all the forms in which women can appear unlovely, that of the 'unfortunate' should ever be touched with tenderest sympathy. Whatever her character may have become, and however her nature may have been transformed, she was herself first wronged and robbed of her womanhood ere she could have contaminated others of her own sex by her example, or debased man, who, having dishonoured her, had afterwards thrown her true young heart as a withered flower from his breast, or cast her as a waste weed away.

With infinite pathos we behold the fairest rosebud, as she often is, nipped ere it could have blossomed into all the beauties of



matronly beauty, and borne fruit in the mother of offspring as lovely as was the lost one. If such a woman, clothed still with the shreds of a moral nature, whose virtue and grace are never utterly destroyed, should reappear dressed as a nurse, her true self may have been 'reclaimed' in her new character and assumed vocation.

But, alas ! however the heart may have been seemingly purified, the dark-flowing urn is there ; however the leprous flesh-sore may have been cleansed and filmed over, the spot remains, ever re-opening, never soundly healed. The life of all her being is touched corruptibly, and thence her mind and soul, in the wholly self-unconscious emanations of conversation, manner, etc., alike impure, bespeak their foul or tainted source.

In a family, young daughters, at least, would soon receive impressions of thoughts and feelings suggestive to them of strangely new things they had never thought and felt before. The moral nature becomes charged with various personal emanations, the more hurtful or deadly because imperceptible, just

as some contagious diseases are the more catching as their germs, floating in the air, escape detection, and admonish no one to be on their guard in their nearness to the person's body whence they proceed.

Nurse 'Unfortunate' will unawares shed her baneful influence on young womanhood's innocence and moral beauty.

I would ask those who ought to know whether this soul-contamination has ever been witnessed—in its origin or its result in family life—from the person of some 'unfortunate' nurse, whose antecedents, of course, are *not* guaranteed by the scrutiny of examination implied by proper registration as to hospital training and qualifications for nursing, including character.

Sometimes a nurse, not herself one of the 'unfortunate' class of women, may have been the matron of a rescue home. For some reason she has quitted that office, and is engaged to take charge of some young wife or daughter. Of nursing she knows nothing, but, with her mental constitution and experience, her observation and con-

versation are directed to the supervision of the patient as if she were one of the poor girls who are always in the ex-matron's eye. I have reason to remember a nurse of this description.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO SISTERS

The Forged Certificate

IN one of our Metropolitan hospitals, famed for the nurses produced under its system of training, two sisters by birth had entered at the same time as probationers, at the end of two years to advance to the higher grade of full nurse—or sister; when completely qualified, either to remain as ward-sister or to enter some nursing institution, and practise her calling as a certificated nurse; or she may hold only a hospital certificate. It would be optional for a nurse thus qualified and guaranteed by either certificate to practise as a private nurse on her *own* account. When engaged in private nursing, something might here be said on behalf of the

public welfare in favour of a nurse who is *still* attached to an institution rather than one who migrates in search of a situation, bearing with her the certificate she had earned some time since, and without any continued credential of what she is, as when engaged from an institution of recognised character. A nurse's own character may have changed since the date of her certificate, and is not followed up when she continues her calling, as private nurse, unattached.

The two sisters I have in view, born of the same parents, were not twins, but nearly of the same age, fifteen months only separating them when first they saw light, which could not then have disclosed their respective pathways in a world which offers so many divergent tracks in after-years.

Two flaxen-haired, blue-eyed children, akin almost, as it were, by twin-birth, and reared in quite the same home environment and school education, they can have differed only, it would appear, in Nature's gifts of mental endowments, moral nature, and bodily temperament.

There they stand together, hand-in-hand,
these two little girls ; so they grew together,

‘ Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition ;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem,
With two seeming bodies, but one heart.’

Blanche and Bella—which the elder, which the younger ?

But with their union in partition, there was a partition in their union when the two girls had grown up to young womanhood. Latent inborn differences of character, nurtured in the earth of bodily temperament, began to assert themselves, declaring the duality of the sisters : Blanche—ardent, truthful, trustful, true, self-sacrificing ; Bella—ardent, fallacious, furtive, fickle, self-loving, self-seeking.

Perhaps also it may be said of Blanche *rather* than of Bella :

‘ If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
Where should he find it purer than in Blanche?’

So it may be anticipated that the careers of the two sisters began to diverge as their characters developed. They yet clung together with the tenacity of almost twin-kinship ; and thus it was Blanche and

Bella entered at the same time the same hospital as nurse probationers.

The public generally do not clearly appreciate the full import of the term 'training' for the duties of a nurse. There may be a vague conception in the public mind of certain technicalities of a handicraft kind which are needed for duly qualified nurse-attendance, chiefly in surgical cases, less necessary in medical cases, though what may be the difference between these two classes of cases is not understood, and, indeed, cannot always be determined with definite accuracy.


But nurse-training conveys to the public mind no conception of the importance of *personal character* as touching the intellectual and moral nature in woman and the heart in unison.

The hospital ward is an environment of human nature in very diverse orders of manhood, womanhood, and childhood, which imparts an influence in the formation and education of the whole inner woman in the course of her training for the nursing vocation.

As such a one bends o'er the bed of some

patient, whatever the case may be in which her hands are at work, the probationer-nurse learns, with a depth of meaning never known and never felt before, most of the qualities which spring up and flourish best in the soul of woman.

The sense of *duty* is realized more thoroughly than in any other vocation, which thus awakens the *conscience* to do what is right and just and true on the sufferer's behalf, whether or not the nurse ministers under the supervision of the doctor. In private nursing the patient may not be under his care in many cases of convalescence or of invalid patients, yet nurse conscientiously fulfils her duty, and with a proportionate sense of responsibility to Him in whose service she enlisted herself, with her motto: 'Inasmuch . . .' She learns, too, the new strange power of *sympathy*, as she feels for the sufferer. *Gentleness*, *loving-kindness*, *patience* in the most trying circumstances, and *self-control*, are hers also in a sense which no other woman may possess, at least in the same perfection—qualities of



nurse-womanhood which are not inconsistent with *firmness* and strength of will with regard to the tuitions of conscientious duty, and in one who can well govern herself, her temper, and her whole being in action.

Thus, all these qualities evoked by training are closely linked together, and move in concert.

A nurse is like some musical instrument, whose notes are touched in harmony by an invisible hand, with the fingers of suffering humanity. And she possesses no less the qualities in common with other good women, but which are not more specially impersonated in her womanhood. *Purity* adorns her face with its own expression of loveliness, lit up with the light of *truthfulness*, which her felt sacred vocation imparts, and which are breathed in all her conversation and womanly gestures; *trustful* also is she in the confidential relationships of her office, even as she herself is faithful in the depths of a heart true to her calling.

Self-sacrifice, in ever doing good to others, a most essential and the crowning qualifica-


tion of the perfect nurse, is, indeed, quite a natural gift ; educated, however, by training for the relief of suffering humanity, at the cost of self in ease, comfort, or even health.

I am certain that this is no ideal picture of nursing womanhood, toned down, however, in different personal representatives.

Nurse Blanche approached nearly to the ideal in the course of her natural development and 'training.'

It would be easy for me to make this portraiture an animated photograph, by showing Blanche in her ward-work. But my professional brethren will readily follow her 'when on duty'; and to the public generally, for whom I write more especially, the technicalities of nursing work would be mostly unintelligible, perhaps uninteresting, or too painfully realistic of suffering as the placid, soft-speaking figure, with her gentle hand, bends over the bed, etc.

In another ward Bella is on duty, for the matron or lady superintendent of the nurses in hospital considers it undesirable that two sisters should work together.




Bella, so like a twin-sister, and who has been fashioned from childhood by the same domestic and social circumstances—up to the time of entering the hospital as a nurse-probationer—will she develop her sister's beauteous qualities of young womanhood, or not?

She is quite as devoted to her work, sharing equally the enthusiasm of Blanche's nature. But Bella's ardour is not toned by sympathy, nor freighted and tempered with those other qualities of character which would constitute her a model nurse. She lacks her sister's gentleness, loving-kindness, and patience, in her attendance on the sick; and with a turbulent temper, unable to govern herself, she speaks and acts with a domineering firmness of purpose, which cannot smooth the pillow and ease the bed of sleepless suffering—away, perhaps, from the wife and children of the bread-winner, and an humble yet happy home. Yes, Thomas Brown, whose big body has fallen off a scaffold, breaking one of his legs, and stunning him with a severe scalp wound, is now in

bed, his soiled clothes sent to the purification-room; and he awakes to a dull, confused sense that he is not at home, and that his wife will wait in vain for his return during the dinner-hour, or in the evening—if his work lay at a distance.

But Nurse Bella is in first attendance on him before the arrival of the house-surgeon. The poor mutilated, rough fellow has all the feelings of a man; and while his body is racked with pain he had never experienced before this first accident, he is distressed, and his heart sinks lower than by the shock of injury, on finding himself in a strange place, with other sufferers groaning around him in the same ward, and he remembers the dinner-hour and his absent wife.

Yes, that bricklayer prostrate in bed, with a badly-broken leg and an almost broken heart, needs indeed the sympathy and the solace of Nurse Bella, with all that equipment of true womanhood which should come to his aid for the next three months. Wife and children may see him, on visiting-days, once or twice a week, for an hour—in



perplexity with regard to ways and means at home, until he is convalescent, and goes home too weak for work ; or a hospital notice may be sent, that *she* may be in time just to see her husband sinking, with dull, half-closed eyes, the sweat standing on his forehead, and his face of a livid paleness, as in the faltering, broken voice he breathes farewell.

His wife and children are bequeathed to God's ways and means.

Nurse Bella's 'duty' is finished towards that 'broken-leg case'; but there are other cases in which to exercise her peculiar qualities of character, and which her training intercourse with suffering has not corrected—a discipline which in the person of her sister Blanche has produced an almost opposite type of young womanhood. The garden of the soul in the two sisters, having the soil trenched and enriched in both alike, and with the same seed sown, has brought forth flowers and fruit in the persons of the good and bad nurse products. Time on, and the produce is yet more diverse—as of the Tree

of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Bella begins to feel her own unfitness for the duties of hospital-nurse ; and she realizes a jealous comparison of Blanche's perfection. The unfit sister will never be able to honestly earn her living as a private nurse, on her own account ; and with her known defects of character, even now that she has finished her course of training, no institution would enter or retain her name on its list of ' certificated ' nurses. Sister Blanche has become a model member of that order of women.

Both sisters have quitted the hospital—the one to the great regret of the matron, and bearing with her the high esteem of all her fellow-workers, bound together by that peculiar tie of affection which unites a body of nurses who have to share all the uncertainties of a calling subject to many chances and vicissitudes ; a calling which cannot secure the permanency of engagement which may belong to another class of women, in domestic service, or in houses of business. A nurse at fifty years of age, who has done

honour to her calling, in many engagements, is as much a floating, drifting, woman as one of twenty-five years' launch on the vast ocean of human life.

But, with Blanche and Bella, their probable careers would differ as widely as their characters.

Blanche was readily recommended by her institution from one patient's case to another's; but having become a private nurse, on her own account, she enjoyed a more lucrative practice; while her sister Bella, having failed to become connected with any institution, floundered with the hope of finding some situation, as a nurse, uncertificated; but in vain she offered herself; nor could she get a private testimonial from patient or doctor.

Thus it was that Bella bethought herself of an expedient, in her dire necessity, to earn her living. Her flourishing sister surely needed not her certificate, and could spare the document without loss to herself.

In these circumstances with relation to her sister and her own need, tempted by

dishonesty, which drugged conscience in her case, as in numberless other instances in every rank of life, the difficulty Bella still felt acutely was dispelled by the promptings of evil.

The uncertificated sister stole her sister's certificate, or, rather, she forged one in her sister's name.

For some time Bella was enabled to obtain employment as nurse, bearing with her the credential of a certificate. Ignorant as the public generally are with regard to the qualifications of the woman who would engage herself as nurse or 'nurse'-attendant, the woman who can produce a 'certificate' from some well-known hospital or nursing institution will surely be accepted in preference to one who styles herself what she is not, in testimony of the value of her services. Sometimes she is further fortified by a 'private reference' as to her kindness and attention, perhaps also the skill with which she brought some lady, gentleman, or child, through the perils of a long illness, and which may have been, apparently, just such

a case as that she would now undertake. In attendance on an invalid patient personal qualifications alone may be sufficient, provided an attendant does not claim to be anything more, in unfair competition with her duly qualified and certificated sisters. Other such nurses there are who have undergone a short training—say of three months—in a cottage hospital or a home, which would seem to place them on an equal footing with a nurse equipped by a complete course of training—three or four years, in any one of the recognised several hospitals of London. Rarely does a medical or surgical practitioner endorse the claims of nurse by a written document or private reference, unless she be duly ‘qualified and certificated.’

Nurse Bella has personated her sister Blanche, her forged certificate bearing the same surname. Bella was exchanged for Blanche in the facsimile copy of her sister’s certificate. Her own name in the forged certificate would have led to discovery of the fraud, in the event, perchance, of any reference being made to the roll of nurses

in the institution to which Blanche was attached. But on one occasion, in answer to an advertisement which appeared in two journals of high-class nursing connection, it chanced—if by chance it was—that both the sisters offered themselves as nurse for attendance in the same case. In fact, no sooner had Nurse Bella, with the forged certificate, entered the house and had been engaged, subject to hearing from the lady definitely after seeing any more applicants during the day—no sooner had the lady-patient seen *this* applicant than her sister Blanche, certificated, called, for the same purpose as Bella, in answer to the advertisement.

Both the sisters—‘like to a double cherry seeming parted’—bore a certain personal resemblance ; but the manner and conversation of the false one gave rather an advantage in her favour. It was odd indeed that these two flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, fair nurses should bear the same surname, with the same Christian name—Blanche ; but a personification which might have seemed only a certain coincidence to the patient

flashed across the mind of the sister, as a possibility—a probability; she, knowing something of the erring antecedents of her poor sister, immediately suspected Bella.


Those who know anything of the love-bond between two sisters in many such instances of blood-relationship will understand also the heart-aching which *she* would feel, who to claim her own right must sacrifice her sister—by fastening upon the beloved second self the personal wrong she has done, and the crime of forgery! Better a thousand times to bear the heart-ache than rend two hearts asunder, killing both. Yet, stimulated by that curiosity which prompts or compels inquiry, Blanche sought Bella's present address, and the two met face to face. In the confessional of that interview love acknowledged the truth, a full and unreserved confession, which penitence in the mouth of halting, faltering fear would never have told. 'Not a word more, dearest Bella,' said Blanche, sitting close, with both her hands clasping the right hand of the forgerer, her tears falling, as if to wash

away the iniquity from the instrument which had done the deed, pardoned by a sister's love on earth, and by trust in Heaven.

The Infanticide

The beginning of evil-doing is like water spilt upon the ground : it cannot be gathered up again. So was it with Bella. She would not, could not, again use the guilt-stained certificate which personated her sister Blanche. Thus her 'private nursing' fell off, as she could no longer pass for what she was not ; and she felt that to style herself nurse or nurse-attendant without any qualifying credential would be no less a falsehood, differing only in degree from holding a false certificate.

But the demon of evil still pursued her ; although she had wrenched herself from his first grasp, he caught her again, to make her his instrument in another form. The argument seemed most plausible. She must earn her living, whoever might pay her wages, or starve !



On a dark December day, when the wind whistled around and the flakes of snow fell fast with a dull thud on the window-panes of a little bedroom, in a retired suburban house, a young lady lay on a couch in that room, which, with the adjoining sitting-room, had been hired on her behalf by a gentleman, who then left the house.

The young lady bore, in her manner and conversation with the landlady, the evidence of birth and culture, while her pensive reticence and sadness of face gave expression to a singular beauty, and won sympathy for one who seemed to need no *special* sympathy. She might be a young mother who, having recently lost her first-born child, felt a grief which is of everyday occurrence, which the kind hand of Nature would chase away, and wipe from her eyes the teardrops that fell, in time to fall no more. 'The Lord gave (a mother's joy), and the Lord hath taken away (a mother's grief).'

A certain fulness of waist and person, with unsteadiness of gait, was scarcely concealed by a looseness of dress which met the eye of

any ordinary unpractised observer. But the fair one might have been placed by her husband in lodgings, as a convalescent, to regain her health in rural surroundings ; but why at such a dismal period of the year ?

Accompanying the young lady lodger there was another young lady, whether a relative, friend, or companion to the high-born invalid no one could have told. On the third day, screams in the bedroom were heard all over the little house, and soon after these signals of suffering, fainter cries followed. The landlady, alarmed, hastened to the room, but the door was locked ; all was still, save now and then the fainter cries, no more than as crackling sparks of a fire, which at last died out.

The young lady friend within an hour quitted the house, bearing a bundle of clothes—a night-dress, etc., for the ‘wash,’ at a residence of which she gave the landlady the address. It might have seemed strange to have the washing done elsewhere ; and, indeed, the young lady in delicate health

was amply provided with dress of every kind. When the landlady visited her in the bedroom, she gave, in explanation of her cries, the fact that she had suffered from 'flooding,' to which she was subject. In a few days she felt that she would be quite well, and as the rooms did not suit her she must leave, paying, of course, the month's rent, for which time the rooms had been taken.

On the day of the young lady friend's departure, the 'husband' called to fetch his wife away. He had not called during the ten days of her absence, as he had received personal information from their young friend of his wife's health. He thanked the landlady for all her kindness and personal attention to the invalid, and gave her a present of a five-pound note, in addition to paying the month's rent.


Thus the mysterious lodger came and went away.

But an unseen eye of justice, softened by mercy, had watched the destiny of that 'bundle of clothes for the wash.' It was traced to the young lady friend's domicile.

A coroner's inquest, held for some mysterious reason, compelled the attendance of *that* young lady, and somehow the clothes, which had not yet been washed, were produced. Within the bundle was concealed the remains of a newly-born child—prematurely. A deep furrow around the neck betokened strangulation, as with a circle of strong string or small cord, which still lay in the bundle.

The inquest was adjourned for a post-mortem examination of the infant. The lungs were found to have been fully inflated, and floated in water, an evidence conclusive, in the absence of gas generated by decomposition, that the infant was born alive. Hence the faint cries ere it was strangled to death.

The death had now assumed the character of murder, and as the bundle containing the little body and cord was found in the possession of the young lady friend, and as she was the only person present at the birth of the infant whose neck bore the cord-mark of strangulation, the said young lady was clearly identified as the murderess. But *she* was



recognised at the inquest as none other than Nurse Bella !

The coroner's jury returned a verdict of murder, and the case went for trial at the criminal sessions. A true bill returned by the grand jury seemed to give the prisoner no chance of escape ; but under the direction of the learned, and certainly merciful, judge, the jury on the trial returned a verdict of ' Concealment of birth.'

But the moral of the story is this : Nurse, with lately the forged certificate, and now guilty of murder, underwent a short imprisonment, and then resumed her private nursing, with liberty to again prove that *her* way of killing is no murder ; and the poor bewildered mother, driven to extremity when pregnant with an illegitimate child, ready to risk her own life in the destruction of her offspring, as an accessory to the crime, escapes scot-free from the hand of Justice.

What human judgment can *rightly* apprise the relative guilt of the mother and the confederate nurse in this crime of murder ? —the one, in *her* extremity, 'to hide her

shame from every eye,' and 'give repentance to her lover,' if herself to die ; the other, in *her* extremity, to save herself, possibly, from the spectre of starvation, by crime. The Unseen Eye alone can adjudicate.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOCTOR NURSE

SINCE the days of Mrs. Gamp—say half a century ago—the progressive development of the modern nurse has culminated in the nurse up-to-date, eclipsing the personality of the great-great-grandmother, or, rather, burying her as an extinct species in ground which can never be opened again to view her remains, unless by express permission of the Home Secretary under an Act of Parliament for the purpose. There she lies, whatever there is of the short, fat, florid-faced woman, of kindly disposition, but stupid, ignorant, negligent, muddled even more by perpetual drops of gin or brandy from the bottle she concealed in her pocket, and stealthily carried to the lips of its owner. Her dress was loose and

slovenly, not too cleanly, certainly not 'aseptic.' She sat thus asleep, awake at fitful intervals to administer the doctor's stuff, in constant attendance, never taking her clothes off for days and nights together, and never washing herself, if she damp-towelled and brushed up her sick charge—man, woman, or child. As death approached the sufferer, the old-fashioned nurse could not see her patient through her bleared eyes—still watching; and when the departed spirit had flitted from its tenement as a bird escapes from a broken cage, nurse, or the 'spirits' within her fat little body, could hardly tell when the Man with the Scythe had called, and the flesh as grass was mown down. She believed that some time in the early morn he usually did his work, and as the death-dew had moistened the grass at 4.17 a.m., she was positively certain that at that hour and minute precisely a corpse lay before her. Besides, to make doubly sure, old nurse asked her unerring witness—the breath-steam or its absence on a piece of glass held near the mouth of the body, living


or dead, and whether the jaw had dropped. But 'I always feels their legs,' which soon stiffen.

Then she proceeds to close the eyelids, to cover the dull, fixed eyes, lest they should see her maudlin grief; and she ties up the jaw lest the tongue should thank her for her night-vigils, while the spirit of the departed yet lingered on the threshold of the unseen, coming back and receding, with fitful renewals and retrogressions of life. Now that death has doubtless gotten the victory in this world, nurse 'lays out' and 'washes' the corpse, and renders other services of decency than dressing and decorating the body ere it lies in its last bed. She declares that soon the wonted smile has returned, with a freshness of colour in exchange for the ashy hue, the face 'looks beautiful.' And then—then old nurse revives herself from her bottle, looking only less beautiful. Exit.

My portfolio includes Blanche, the modern and model nurse. Look on her picture and that of her great-great-grandmother. But the two contrast more than in personal

appearance, dress, and character. The education of to-day has reached the modern representatives of nursing women. The 'school-master is abroad' — a saying of Lord Brougham, who did so much to popularize higher education—has knocked at the door, and been admitted into hospital training schools, and in the person of some specially appointed member of the medical and surgical staff regular courses of lectures and practical instruction are given to nurses. They are not left to discover for themselves what should be their course of training in the wards, and are taught very much more in the knowledge of elementary anatomy, physiology, and practical work with relation to the treatment of diseases and injuries.

Whether or not the nurse up-to-date is thus *overtaught* does not enter into the purpose of this essay to discuss. A corresponding order of examinations concludes the nurse's curriculum ere she can obtain her 'certificate' of qualification. The outcome of all this advanced education has produced its



fruit ; ripe and good nurses, unripe and bad—as with regard to their technical education and knowledge. But, while possessing far greater fitness for the duties of a trained nurse, other personal qualifications being equal, our nurse of the newest pattern is apt to assume the impersonation of the doctor, under whose directions she is mostly in service.


I was perhaps the first member of my profession to pronounce the name ‘profession’ in the former now defunct Association of British Nurses. The title ‘professional nurse’ has now grown familiar. But the two professions—that of physician, surgeon, medical practitioner, and that of nurse or sister—cannot possibly be identical, although both doctor and nurse necessarily meet on common ground in their attendance on the sick for the mutual benefit of the patient, and with the happiest relation between themselves, so long as they both fulfil their respective functions, never to be confounded.

The public generally fall readily into error, grievous to the patient’s welfare. Both doctor

and nurse often act together in the same cases, and their distinctive professions, certainly their relative duties and special merits, may seem to be a distinction without any essential difference. Nay, the public may, perchance, have no affection for the doctor's compared with the nurse's merits; and then the husband, wife, son, or daughter, would reverse the famous definition, more witty than wise: 'The doctor is a man (or nowadays a woman) who pours medicine, of which he (or she) knows little, into a body of which he knows less;' but that 'the nurse pours medicine, of which she knows much, into a body of which she knows more'!

Given, therefore, a fully-trained nurse, 'such a clever nurse,' in attendance with the doctor—the one also presenting a more winning personality than the other member of the same profession, as they seem to be in the eyes of a patient, the relatives and friends—which of these two will gain most the confidence and the gratitude of the public?

Assuming even more on behalf of the



nurse, she, with her qualifications and personal qualities, is self-assertive, and talks largely of her experience, and of how little she thinks of some doctors, young, perhaps, in their profession, and of small practice. The doctor nurse quite eclipses the doctor.

To fill in the picture with more touches of detail :

Nurse arrives in attendance on a case. She enters the sick-room. An old feeble-minded husband is lying in bed ; an anxious, nervously-excitabile wife is watching by his side.

‘ So thankful, nurse, *you* have come ! Doctor said he would send you, although ’ (aside) ‘ *he* assures me there is no danger.’

Nurse approaches the bed with an engaging smile ; she places her two fingers on the pulse, and withdraws from her waistband a small watch. The old husband looks up at her with a puzzled expression ; the wife eyes her attentively. Suddenly nurse’s visage drops to zero as she interprets the language of the pulse with almost momentary decision.

‘ Here we have a bad case.’

The old man closes his eyes in hopeless despair, as of one doomed to death in the prisoner’s box ; his wife’s face bespeaks the unutterable as she hears nurse’s verdict.

But no. Nurse yet hopes (D.V.) to ‘ pull the patient through,’ despite the bad case, and she has shrewdly not pronounced a hopeless prognosis. The patient *does* recover, and certainly while in nurse’s hands, the doctor paying his visits, prescribing and giving directions which may or may not be fully carried out. Has not nurse fully justified her superior professional claims ? and does not her self-assertiveness entitle her to the appellation ‘ doctor nurse ’ ?

In surgical cases, more especially, a self-assertive nurse may more readily pass for a surgeon, and in these days, when properly authorized women doctors may practise surgery.

The training of a nurse rightly includes some knowledge of surgical apparatus employed in the treatment of numerous surgical cases, and she possesses therefore a nurse-

knowledge of mechanical appliances in cases involving their use. But her training does not comprise the prior detection, the diagnosis of the kind of injury or local disease—pathological knowledge which is needed for the efficient use of the mechanical appliances. So, again, in the performance of surgical operations, her knowledge of the instruments used, enabling her to assist in some cases, does not enable her to follow the operator, whose hands are methodically at work, deeper and yet deeper in the anatomical structure of the body, while death may hover around the point of his knife.

In either respect, the knowledge of a thoroughly qualified nurse is simply mechanical, and any further knowledge—as of the structure, functions, and altered conditions of the parts from injury or disease—does not concern her—might, indeed, be positively mischievous in most cases—but pertains to the surgeon, who is alone responsible. Nurse cannot lawfully practise surgery; she has not undergone any examination for that purpose, and she does not hold any diploma

or degree in surgery of any College of Surgeons or of any University.

In their rightly-understood relationship, the surgeon fully appreciates nurse's co-operation with him, and thankfully acknowledges her services. The patient, relatives and friends cannot rightly estimate the one, and will overestimate the other. The popular conception is hazy and confused, and, in the eyes of many people, the nurse handing the instruments and the surgeon using them are too intimately associated together to be practically distinguished. The surgeon might be more readily transferred into the nurse, than the nurse seem to be discredited as a surgeon. Their identification would have been once a paradox ; but now the time gives it proof! Of course, I speak not of hospital practice, but of private cases, and of some nurses only, as representatives of 'the newest pattern.'

In the medical, as distinguished from the surgical, treatment of disease, there are 'doctor nurses' not a few. They figure, sometimes, in the daily papers, as medical

authorities, granting certificates as testimonials, recommending the beneficial effects of various medicines and articles of diet for the sick. These nurses are quite of the latest fashion. Here is one such doctor nurse, of many others, whose testimonial of Byrrh, as a tonic wine, I read in the *Sunday Times*, March 19, 1899 :

‘ As an invigorating and restorative tonic, I must say Byrrh is far superior to any wine I have tried both for “ patients ” and for myself.

‘ NURSE MARINA STEENE, R.B.N.A.

‘ HOME VILLA, 22, NORTH BANK, N.W.’

The obvious inference from this testimonial would be that ‘ Nurse Steene ’ has patients of her own, under her treatment, as well as doctoring herself, a case in which probably, by a mistaken professional opinion, she could do no harm to anybody.

There is yet another nurse of the same species, be they many or few, whose self-assertiveness assumes another form. She affects to be a great authority on all sanitary arrangements, turning the house round, and

ordering all its inmates in subjection to her special knowledge of hygiene. Beginning with the sick-room: 'I must have all this altered, or I cannot stay here.' She is a radical sanitary reformer. The same spirit of absolute authority extends to the household service under her sway. The husband, who may be 'very much married,' now finds in nurse a new mistress of himself, and of his servants in their respective offices, whether male or female domestics. Everybody nurse would order and control, as subservient to the proper management of the sick-room, and of the patient 'who is under my care.' But why follow any further the footsteps all over the house of this irrepressible, untamable shrew? The doctor nurse figures mostly—for an obvious reason—when she is in attendance alone, as in cases of chronic invalid patients. Her self-assertiveness to be what she is not may simply express an unbecoming character only. But she appears in quite another light when the same character is that rather of an impostor upon the credulity of a public ever credulous in Nurseland.

CHAPTER VII

NURSE GOSSIP AND SCANDAL—THE OBSCENE NURSE

THE first-named species of nurse may not be a distinct character, apart from some other nurse-forms of 'the latest fashion,' but she is specially distinguished by her confidential communications — that 'they *do* say' of others, whatsoever probably she knows her own self to be as if in them.

Nurse Scandal sometimes taking form as the obscene nurse, the latter species is more often distinctly specialized, and more surely a disclosure of the woman's own depravity:

But an unbridled tongue is a traitor to more than its possessor. A high authority on nurses and nursing writes thus on the golden beauty and value of SILENCE :

‘ Perhaps no one is more behind the scenes of life than is the sick-nurse ; perhaps no one else comes into such close contact with the sacred and secret concerns of life as she does. Doctors, lawyers, and clergymen have many revelations, many insights into the recesses of family secrets ; they know of sins and strange complications little dreamt of by the outer world. Still, their visits are limited compared to those of a nurse, who spends day after day and night after night in the house of sickness, hearing much and seeing more than many may at first sight suppose. Much is told to the doctor, lawyer, and clergyman, but the sick-nurse has even more confidence given into her charge. She can see as well as hear many details of many a sad and complicated life. Nurses should keep these confidences as faithfully as they would have their own private affairs treated. They must hold all such knowledge gained in their work as sacred, covering it with *silence*.

‘ Again, it is hardly good taste to talk to patients of our [nurses’] professional work, or

to give them details of cases and their treatment.

‘It is not honourable to discuss the merits of one medical man compared with those of another.

‘It is ridiculous to brag about one’s own social standing, or to pretend we are not working for our living.

‘It is not fair to depreciate to others nurses who are seniors in age and standing, and to underrate their work because not quite in accordance with the modern ideas of nursing.

‘Almost unconsciously we allow ourselves to drift in conversation. We say things which are faulty both in taste and charity, remarks which we bitterly regret, and would give worlds to recall, leaving only a *stain* which need never have been had we only kept silence.

‘Recluses we may not be. Careful conversation or discreet silence need not strip us of sympathy, nor make us lack interest in the joys and sorrows of our fellow-creatures. But secrets once discussed must take their

course ; there is no calling them back again ; penitence has no power to make good a broken faith.

‘ Regret for hasty and foolish words, sorrow for gossipy and scandalous conversations, remorse for having given into the confidence of another the secret thoughts of our *own* soul, come to us alike ; and in the darkness and stillness of the night, with no one to see or hear, we have blushed and then grown cold with the recollection of the weak and erring utterances of our tongue.’—
GEORGINA SCOTT, late Matron of the Sussex County Hospital. (*Royal British Nurses’ Association Journal*, March, 1899.)



CHAPTER VIII

MASSEUSES


QUITE modern medicine has demonstrated the remedial efficacy of friction, rubbing, and kneading various parts of the body in the treatment of diseases to which they are subject. This method of mechanically relieving pain, restoring muscular power and movements, and of regaining sensibility—in many nervous and muscular affections, especially—has received the name of *massage*. The advance of women all along the line of human progress, and notably in the march of medicine—like a huge wave on the ocean of our social life—has brought up a considerable number of women-*masseurs*, whose profession is *massage*.

When properly trained in the school of

medicine, it cannot be doubted that such women are valuable *adjuvants* to the practitioner of medicine and surgery. The manual dexterity, combined with firmness and lightness of touch, with which the hand of woman is endowed, and when perfected by practice, will enable any such feminine manipulator to exercise a mechanical art more effectively than most male competitors. And if, in addition, a naturally womanly character, coupled with the delicacy and refinement of culture, moves with the hand in the performance of her duties, the masseur-woman will be a valuable member of Society.

She is akin to the *properly* qualified nurse, in her professional relationship, and like her is fitted to attend private cases (of massage) under supervision of the medical practitioner ; or the two callings may be *united*.

It is easy, however, to imagine the woman, the lady-masseur, or masseuse, as she styles herself, whose *untrained* hand, and defective tone of *moral* character, would reverse the picture of the rightfully named masseuse. Which may be most harmful, her hand or




her heart, when its resources are brought into play in *private* practice ?

The public, in many cases, could answer this question from personal experience of the masseur-woman, and the unpublished memoirs of family life. The disclosure would traverse most of the careers of which glimpses have been seen in the private nursing of the untrained and uncertificated, unregistered, or some other 'Mock-Nurses of the Latest Fashion.' If we could not track 'Satan in Petticoats' in some portions of her dark life-history, we might certainly discover the 'husband-huntress and trapper,' or find the 'husband-seducer masseuse,' or encounter the 'breach-of-promise lady-rubber.' She rarely appears, perhaps, as the 'dangerous widow'; nor does the said lady ever belong to any 'religious order of women.' Nor can the species of woman known as masseuse be classed with the 'unfortunate' nurse, who mostly commences her career as a hard-driven exile from home, more sinned against than sinning. The fair but frail masseuse is a distinct species, having a

double occupation in a life which lends itself to both. In her proper professional capacity the lady masseuse passes for a sort of 'doctor nurse.'

Nigh round the corner of a fashionable square at the West End of London, where luxury and rank smile, each admiring the other's beauty, stands a small house which, as a lean-to to the adjoining mansion, seems to be an offshoot from that abode of bliss—not perfect, of course, as no human condition can be.

A lady-rubber took the useless small tenement for one year's trial in the practice of her art. Painted of a cream-white colour, like the tenant, it looked a pretty little box, with its large brass-handled door, and the pure white lace curtains drawn across the window, except at an interval formed by two blue satin sashes, which presented an almost complete blind to any intrusive gaze over the railings of the little area. This room was the lady-masseuse's first sanctum; a recess at the back, without any window, and which was furnished with a luxurious couch,



provided accommodation for any elderly or crippled patients to derive the benefits of rubbing without having to ascend the stairs to a bedroom above. The lady herself rivalled the remaining upholstery in her dress, that of a nurse, but more expensive, if not more becoming.

She distributed her 'card' all over the neighbourhood, announcing herself 'Miss —, Masseuse, P—— Place.' Her hours, 'at home' in the morning, 11 a.m. till 2 p.m., 'afterwards by appointment,' as she had her out-patients to attend at their houses. She drove a brougham hired from the livery stables attached to the stabling of the square.

Occasionally some elderly gentleman, or it may be a lady, called, and the hall door having been opened by a well-appointed maid, the patient was taken in and done for by the massage treatment. Each sufferer's rubbing in the hands of this skilled manipulator, as she seemed to be, would occupy an hour, more or less, ere the fee, 7s. 6d. or half a guinea, was duly earned; and as a

course of treatment was generally recommended, the practice was not unremunerative. So massage, in hands which the owner knew how to work, might have grown into a flourishing concern.

But besides the patients who came and went, the domicile was visited by others who might have been grateful recipients of the treatment, who called just to show themselves as trophies of the system which had restored them to health and strength; there were gentlemen in the prime of life, whose vital powers needed no replenishment; they bore the steady-going manners of middle-aged married men, for whom loving eyes would watch their coming home to dinner, and look brighter when they came; and besides these 'patients' there were elderly clubbites who called on the way to their home. All these visitors to the lady-masseuse called in hansom cabs—never in private carriages—and they never drove up to the door, but alighted round the corner in the square. So altogether a pretty deal of business went on in the white cream-

coloured little domicile ; the lady at home had her hands full of subjects for rubbing, etc.


Whisperings from the wagging tongues of neighbours began to report their suspicions. That massage cases were treated by her in her elegant sanctum, and in the bedroom overhead, there could be no doubt from the testimony of those who had undergone the cure, and who moved in the best society. Still, the whisperings grew into something like a complaint that the house was a sort of nuisance. Then the attention of the Vestry was directed to the business of the fair masseuse. The Board were very reluctant to interfere unless some definite complaint was brought to their notice, and by a written application, signed by some half-dozen neighbours. They, however, declined the invitation. Then the Board sent two vigilant policemen ; but they saw—nothing.

The lady having heard somehow of some imputation against her skill as a masseuse, or her manner of using the treatment, threatened any informant with legal pro-

ceedings. She would go instantly to her lawyer, who knew her well, or as well as any man can know a woman, or one of a kind never to be known.

The wave of rumour, still rising, spread far and wide; or, say, the fire smouldering, at length broke out into a blaze; until the house and the lady occupant would have been sacrificed to the clamour of her neighbours in the side-street. The noble inmates of the house immediately adjacent dwelt serenely unconscious of *their* neighbour; two young daughters sitting in the conservatory, separated only by a partition wall 'twixt them and the massage couch, and bedroom above—could they have dreamed of anything wholly outside the happy experience of innocent young womanhood?

The lady-masseuse was about to flee away from her uncongenial surroundings, and open a *modest* establishment elsewhere, in some fashionable watering-place, the resort of London's rheumatic or nerve-worn invalids, and other break-downs in the battle of pleasure and pain, among those who live too



much in the charms of Society and its atmosphere.

But the lady's career in her present locality had now reached its climax. The landlord was informed that the house was not so clean and pure as it looked. He knocked at the door, and an unsuspected visitor was instantly admitted by the maid, as probably another case of her mistress's art. He passed the lower sanctum, and made direct for the bedroom. There lay the lady-masseuse, and there also what he saw he believed. Within an hour the tenant was ejected, her luggage following this accomplished feminine rubber up to date.

CHAPTER IX

THE MIDWIFE AND THE MONTHLY NURSE

IN concluding the present series of representative 'Mock-Nurses of the Latest Fashion,' there yet remain several other types whose living portraiture lies in a state of suspended animation in my escritoire.

Thus, only to mention the 'Night-brawling Midwife,' with one of her nurse-girls of the same breed—the one holding a 'three months' certificate' of qualification from a certain lying-in hospital; the other, 'one month's qualification' for her duty. Here is an authoritative description of the latter nurse species, as expressing her personal qualities.

'She has not in her the making of a nurse; she is utterly selfish and cruel. Whenever she would have a holiday she would leave



her charge in a dying state to keep her appointment with her man, who is waiting round the corner.'

She sallies forth, wearing an unfortunate dress from head to foot. Having doffed her nurse attire, see her thus: Hat surmounted with huge white ostrich (?) feather, etc., purple-blue cloth gown, bespangled with silver filigree, an open frilled chemisette, arranged to disclose that which the wearer affects to conceal. A front longitudinal fold in the dress, buttock-tightened, guides to her conformation below; while nameless shoes with buckles invite attention to her ankles.

This midwife-nurse returns to her patient too late for duty; and being shut out (to call again in the morning), she reappears armed with the aforesaid brawling midwife. After repeated thundering rapping at the street door, accompanied with bell-breaking ringing, the midwife's voice is heard under the patient's bedroom. The husband, alarmed for his poor wife's safety—and himself a great sufferer, as she with the hat and feather well knows—the husband in his

night-dress is now at the dining-room window : shutters and window fly open ; a crowd with a hundred midnighters, headed by a policeman (388 F), meets his dazed eyes. ' This job,' shouts the midwife, ' will cost you some pounds, besides a good hotel bill for this girl's bed and breakfast ' (at the house of the deliverer from the pains and perils of child-birth).

A small fee—half a crown, ready money—at once sufficed to discharge all the husband's liabilities and silence the *threats* of this lying-in woman.

NOTE.—This glimpse of a midwife and of her girl, both up to date, will supply any additional evidence touching the Registration of Midwives, for the next deputation to lay before the Lord President of the Council.



CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS SISTERHOOD NURSES

High Church and Low Church Anglican Nurses


AN advertisement for two nurse-attendants, which appeared in two Church papers, stated the following qualifications :

‘Wanted, two Nurse-Attendants. Elderly invalid lady. Must be members of the Anglican Church, unmarried, good lifters, and total abstainers. No house work.—Apply 43, Catchemalivo Square.’

Among numerous applicants answering to this description of nurse-kind, the two most eligible, with good reference as to character, and the usual personal qualifications, were selected. Both were ‘untrained’ and ‘uncertificated.’

Animated Photographs

First Nurse-Attendant.—Member of the High Church Anglican. A young lady, a superior person. Habited as pertaining to some order of nun-sisterhood, wrought into the dress of a nurse-sister, her appearance at once won the eye and the heart of the religiously æsthetic admirer. The enclosed woman, where visible, within a long black cloak, and small black bonnet with pendent veil behind, presented a figure and a face no less remarkable and impressive. With a somewhat stooping form—not by age—her marble forehead, surmounted by a white band, not quite concealing a mid-parted fall of wavy chestnut hair, arched over features equally attractive : liquid, pensive, downcast eyes, a Grecian nose, and thin-lipped, refined mouth, whence flowed the mellow tones of a voice sympathetic and soothing. Her countenance was truly the dial of God's presence in the soul of woman. Personal intercourse with this High Church maiden fully justified this impression. But, 'un-



trained' to her proposed vocation, she knew little or nothing of nursing, and ill corresponded to one special term of the advertisement. She was not a 'good lifter' of the helpless patient, whose body might be seriously damaged by an accidental fall in the arms of nurse-attendant, however ably she might raise and elevate the soul of the sufferer.

Second Nurse-Attendant.—An older young lady. Member of the Low and Evangelical Church Anglican. In fact, it was doubtful whether this uncertificated representative of the nursing order hadn't dropped 'lower' into some less definite form of Protestant denominationalism—as a 'Plymouth Sister.'

Habited in no distinctively religious costume, nor bearing the borrowed plumage of Nurseland, beyond wearing a little cap, which bespoke nothing of any sisterhood or association; a plain, modest, quiet dress corresponded with the appearance and character of the wearer. An inanimate woman, with an abundance of yellow hair rolled into a knot behind the head, her face

was singularly devoid of any beauty ; gray eyes with a vacant stare, and an unmeaning large nasal appendage ; a wide mouth, always open, disclosed a set of teeth—the owner's own—the front members of which projected from lips which could scarcely cover them.

With this weak expression of face—seemingly sensual—there was combined an uncommon strength of inward character, the product of a dull mind with denser ignorance, which seemed to its possessor all brightness and light. Yes, she had her convictions, beyond the reach of any human re-tuition by any Church clerical or lay instructor, unalterable and perfect. For why ? ‘She was taught by the Spirit,’ had been some years since suddenly converted, and would be ever safely guided, and saved, of course, as one of the ‘elect,’ at last. Inexhaustible self-conceit, moving in the darkness of uneducated ignorance, had done more to form the character of this religious nurse-attendant than spiritual agency.

‘They all say I am a good woman, in whatever situation I have been,’ she often

remarked, with the self-appreciation of proud humility. So little did she esteem others as even possibly better than herself, she refused to say the Lord's Prayer to the helpless invalid lady. 'I cannot feel sure that, as many others, she may rightly be included in the petitions to "*our* Father."' Nevertheless, a more faithful and self-sacrificing attendant in long hours of vigil could not be desired—if only she had known a little of nursing.

This religious woman is another form of 'Mock-Nurse of the Latest Fashion.'

Reader, which of these two types of nurse I have depicted, each personally, do you prefer to minister in their calling to your wife, your husband, your son or daughter, in sickness, with the addition of religious instruction and consolation? Which of these two, alike untrained and uncertificated, do you choose, or neither?

Some Experiences of Religious Nurses

Holding as I do a decided opinion, from experience, as to the rightful connection of the

nursing order of woman with religious sisterhoods—allowing perfect freedom of choice in that connection—I would also urge the claims of womanhood to a vocation, especially woman's own work, but involving a course of special training, for the public good.

The public in general are incompetent to recognise the properly qualified nurse when they see one, and, rightly connecting a certain religious character with a truly beneficent calling, are commonly misled in their own choice.

Sister Lydia, of High Church or Roman Catholic proclivities, having the freedom of intercourse with the sick which religious and cultured young womanhood soon wins, as nurse-attendant, becomes a great favourite in a family. She discourses her sweet music, to those who never lent an ear before, in her conversation; and the anxious heart of a husband, son, or daughter is open to melody they had ere then never been disposed to listen to.

It may have been no melody to them to hear the monotoned Church Service read,

or the plaintive wail of the broken heart chanted in Litany—as if the heart in distress ever found vent in song! As well might the shipwrecked mariner sing his last wild hope for deliverance when sinking in the abyss of the ocean.

But your (High Church) religious nurse, who is thus in the midst of a drowning family, is commonly no more a ‘nurse’ than she is an actress in melodrama; and in virtue of a prepossessing personality she holds an office for which the properly qualified is a handicapped competitor. The nurse with nursing merits only is hardly in the running for the public favour, despite her ‘two or three years’ training’ in a general hospital, one year of which may be passed in a special hospital, with her ‘certificate’ accordingly, and credentials of proven good character.

‘Nurse (attendant) Johanna,’ of Evangelical Church connection formerly, now a ‘Plymouth Sister,’ is no more qualified for her self-named calling than she is to be leading lady in some burlesque play or comic opera. She, too, can sway the heart in sickness, and soothe the

relatives of the sufferer with her peculiar tenets of religious consolation ; while I am sure they can all alike profit by her example of Christian self-sacrificing character. She vies with, yet not outrivals, her fair Sister Lydia, in her ministrations. And she equals, yet not surpasses, the Madonna, in her innocency of nursing knowledge and practice.

In the particular Johanna I have in view, she did her duty to the utmost of her ability, and was wont to recline after back-aching attendance on her charge. ‘I *lay* and thinks,’ she informed the doctor, was her habit during intervals of nursing care. ‘Quite so,’ rejoined the man of medicine. ‘You *lay*, but where is the egg?’

One more notable difference between these two religious orders of nurses. High Church Sister Lydia, with all her personal charms, conscientiously espoused the ‘vow of celibacy,’ as in religious sisterhoods ; the Low Church, Evangelical, or ‘Plymouth Sister’ Johanna, with her less attractive personal outfit, was equally convinced, among her other ‘con-

victions,' of the 'religious nurse's' claims to marriage, etc.

When Sunday brought periodic relief to both these joint labourers in the service for the 'Inasmuch . . .,' both of them deserted the patient for yet higher personal duties, the one going to 'Matins' at St. Alban's, Holborn, and in the afternoon to the Church of the Jesuit Fathers; the other nurse-attendant repairing to her meeting-room, and afterwards 'she lay and thinks.'

Having some reason to know the *inner* life of at least one religious sisterhood, I would take this opportunity of offering a few remarks on the 'vow of celibacy,' from the impression left upon my mind—without any prejudice whatever against any order of religious sisters, who rank high in their self-sacrificing service to suffering humanity.

The 'vow' is not administered in any simply nursing sisterhood, although the order of women in that vocation may bear a distinctly religious character and association.

The nurse's self-dedication to a day and night occupation, which implies the separate

life while remaining unbound by a professed 'vow,' inspires her character and conduct with far more spiritual strength than might or would be conferred by a ceremonial pledge in a religious sisterhood. When thus animated and sustained, she feels her nursing vocation to be a mission, herself a missionary in life-work, which subjects her to many trials that attest both her self-sacrifice and her fidelity. Marriage, of course, is open to her. But this perfectly natural and honourable new life to her, involving the surrender of a calling to which she is bound by her nature and happiest experiences, would not be lightly entertained, and yet would *not* involve her faithlessness to a *sworn* promise by one whose previous fidelity would be the truest guarantee of a wife's constancy and devotion to duty. I write of that which I know, and testify of that which I have witnessed.

The High Church cleric—to whom Sister Lydia would have given her heart in marriage, as a woman who would and she wouldn't—is a type of modern cleric in the

Roman-Anglican Church, whose character, if marred by theological and ritualistic tenets, is redeemed by a pathetic humanity in doing good works.


Thence, this cleric is intimately associated with the life-work of certain sisterhoods. In the high calling, say, of a deaconess, whose *true* service can be consistent only with perfect freedom, amid circumstances of *trial*, the vow-bound celibate, fortified by a corresponding 'law of conduct,' may possibly lose, insensibly, her personal strength of character with allegiance of the heart, which can alone insure fidelity to her calling; although the separate life, free from domestic ties and cares, may be one essential qualification for *her* service, no less, yet not more, than in nurse-life.

As part of the revival of medieval clericalism, whose main purpose seems to be, not so much to purify and elevate the soul, as to govern the soul, say, of woman, *e.g.*, in the confessional, the vow of celibacy is administered (so far as the author can learn) only in High Church sisterhoods, and not in

any Nonconformist community of women workers.

The insecurity of this pledge was demonstrated, in at least one instance of breakdown, by the curate under whose direction a deaconess was engaged in parochial work, his elopement and marriage with the fair sister giving practical proof, moreover, of his clerical authority to revoke on earth what was registered in heaven !

A nurse, 'steadfast and true'—as the badge on her breast declares her heaven-born calling—tried in similar circumstances, but of proven fidelity, presents a type of womanhood which is *non-proven*, and is the expression (only) of the fickle 'law of conduct,' 'by which woman agrees to be bound,' in (certain) religious sisterhoods; nor is woman's *own* power and beauty of character seen in a portraiture which presents her moving in a mechanical routine, under the obligation of a pledge which surrenders her chief personal right (of marriage) into the custody of a priesthood—who (possibly) may be an unreliable investment of her confiding trust.



CHAPTER XI

OTHER MOCK-NURSES UP TO DATE

THE species—for they are not *all* types—of false nurses who, with other even less admirable male *dramatis personæ*, figure in these serial stories must now be supplemented by some of my latest professional experiences, ere a devoted wife—the light of my life—at last passed away from things temporal to the eternal (October 15th, 1899).


In the course of two years of paralytic helplessness, she felt most gratefully the kindness and constant attention of some women who, not fully trained, and uncertificated, came from nursing homes, and who, possessing all the best personal qualities of nurse-womanhood, performed their duties with tender care and unremitting fidelity.

Of other such attendants the sufferer's sad experiences were altogether in painful contrast.

DIARY NOTES.—‘Those papers of yours in the *Medical Press* (July *et seq.*, 1899), so far as I have read them, are quite true, and their publicity will do a vast deal of good.’

Memorandum.—‘In connection with the robbery of £5, in sovereigns, from the work-box of my helpless wife, Nurse ——— volunteered, in the first instance, the following statement, prior to the arrival of a detective police - constable from Paddington Police-Station.

‘Nurse explained to me how easily the said robbery could be effected; that, if the box was locked, the key was always in my wife's basket (accessible to *either* of her two trusted attendants), and that the helpless patient herself hardly seemed to know what money she had in her possession; then, in the dusk of the evening, when resting on her bed, as usual, half asleep, how readily her money could be taken in a moment by *anyone* having the knowledge where to find



and how to get it unobserved. "Of course money can never be traced, and would soon be deposited in a savings bank." "Remember, madam," just after the discovery of the robbery, "a false charge," looking steadily at the victim, "would cost you at least £100, for defamation of character!"

'This nurse requests a memorandum from me, acquitting *her* of the robbery (which was therefore committed by the other attendant), and also requests me to send for the detective, that *she* may be assured by him that her name is not recorded in the "reference book" at the police-station. Both these assurances, she says, are necessary, in the event of any robbery occurring in any other situation she might hold as nurse-attendant, as she would *thus* be able to clear herself of any suspicion against her, by showing the memorandum of her acquittal—in perhaps similar circumstances in her new situation. I gave the nurse my card to herself see the inspector at the station, or to send the detective to see her, that she might obtain (from the police) any assurances

she thought fit to obtain, and could get. She has *not* used the card I gave her for her own expressed purpose.'

Memorandum.—'Nurse is certainly a most observant bedroom attendant, and a far-seeing woman, with regard to possible or probable contingencies.

"As to the loss of your spoons, madam, they would have been soon melted down."

'Concerning the two nurse-attendants in whose hands the dying patient drew her last breath, my diary notes speak of their competency rather than of their moral character.

'One of them at the moment of death sat reading a novel, afar off in a window-recess; the other, affrighted, immediately deserted her post at the bedside and ran out of the room. Both nurses (from homes) were utterly ignorant—never having been present at a death-bed—of the offices preparatory to placing the deceased in a coffin, and they would have left her (body) propped up in bed, as when death released her spirit. The housekeeper of a neighbour-friend was called

in by these "nurses" to perform *their* duty.'
The rest is silence.

BURIED, ALAS, IN RICHMOND CEMETERY,
INSTEAD OF THE APPOINTED GRAVE AT WILLESDEN,
MY DEAREST WIFE FOR FORTY YEARS,
IS THE 'MABEL CARLTON' (NÉE MATILDA CRAWSHAY) OF
'PERFECT WOMANHOOD.'
STRONG IN WEAK HEALTH,
HER LIFE-LONG SELF-SACRIFICE WAS GRACED WITH ALL THE
BEAUTIES AND VIRTUES OF A TRUE WOMAN.
CONNAUGHT SQUARE, LONDON,
January, 1900.

A REMINISCENCE

MABEL CARLTON

MEMORY pictures how true it is—

‘ the poet sings,

That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow is remembering happier
things.’


’Tis forty years since—1859-1899—there dwelt in a small suburban house a newly-married couple whose domestic life was one of truest happiness under adverse circumstances of marriage—*not* socially *à la mode*.

The income of the bride and bridegroom was very slender for a wife who had sacrificed all the surroundings and the self-enjoyments of a luxurious country house, to throw in her lot with a man who had nothing else to give but his heart in the exchange.

Mabel had no experience of the restricted

expenditure which her altered circumstances had thus imposed upon her. But her trustful love only asked for his faithful love in return, placed as she now was in such a novel situation. She would try to make both ends of their small income meet for their subsistence.

Mabel's new home was but scantily furnished out of his small savings. Their little drawing-room opened by folding-doors into an equally small back dining-room. A corresponding bedroom above the drawing-room was occupied by the God-united pair; the back-room by their only servant—a tidy girl. A little back-garden—a suburban strip of grass, with a flower border along the surrounding pathway—mockingly reminded poor Mabel of the extensive lawn, the figured parterre with the adjoining conservatory, and the park beyond, which she had known from childhood; and Mabel's one little drawing-room was, oh, so different from the superb suite of reception-rooms which she had always been accustomed to in home balls and At Homes. Doubtless the change was felt by




Mabel, and the more deeply as, with true womanly love and courage, she concealed the realization of her new home from her husband's susceptible devotion. The mantel-piece mirror might have presented to her view a sorrowful face, with perhaps now and then tearful eyes. Around the glass Mabel's hand had hung a sugar-work chaplet of flowers from the wedding-cake, at which she gazed sometimes during his daily absence as an emblem reminding her of her trustful love in him.

Their daily life was simple and uneventful. Regularly her all-in-all left home after their frugal breakfast for his professional duties, such as they were. Mabel accompanied him to the gate, and gave him a parting kiss, or she would walk with him to the end of the lane, and there waft an adieu from her lips until he was out of sight. He dined at a restaurant near the hospital, in London, on his 'out-patients' days; she alone, waited on by Molly, the servant-of-all-work, instead of her father's stately butler. One improvement only in their domestic arrangements

seemed open to Mabel at present. She called the girl by her surname—Maggs—instead of Molly, as the bride's former lady's-maid was known by her surname—Simpson—instead of Florence, which would have sounded too familiar to Mabel's ear. I am not certain, however, that Maggs denotes any less social equality than Molly, while it certainly is not a more distinguished name. In the afternoon, when Ronald returned home, he was always met with a smiling welcome and salutation from his young wife, and the evening passed happily together. On Saturday he would return by mid-day, and then, in summer-time, the pair would ramble together in the fields around their domicile, netting butterflies, as lovers when the world was young.

Few visitors had they. Sometimes one of Mabel's sisters came from home to call upon her, and the sister would gather up the skirt of her dress, and wonder how 'dear Mabel' could turn round in her nut-shell of a drawing-room—not so large as the game-room at — Park. And the greater wonder



was how she could eke out her small income. Then the sister would tell Mabel all the home news, which might be cheering or otherwise. That the place looked beautiful on a May morning she could well believe; but she could not be there to see her favourite exotics, and wander in the woods as formerly. Or she might hear that her father was suffering from another bad attack of gout, not cheering to a devoted daughter, who could not be with him to read the paper at his side when first he ventured down into the conservatory.

For a time Mabel's wedding trousseau gave her a fashionable appearance, which ill-accorded with the small house in which she dwelt; but after a year or two her dresses, which had been re-made up, wore out, and then she appeared in others of cheaper materials, and which were less well-fitted to her figure. Her ivory-satin bridal dress alone remained, and that, re-made, had been dyed to a pink costume for Sunday attire, when the house affairs did not call her from her drawing-room; for I should mention,

that on Molly Maggs's Sunday out, once a month, our Mabel herself did duty, with every pre-arrangement that could be contrived to save her from menial work.

The young wife longed for a cottage piano—a grand piano could not have been got into her drawing-room. She regularly made her weekly calculations of expenditure, putting down everything with pencil on paper, so as not to exceed her means by weekly payments. By thrift—remarkable in one who had never known economy before marriage, with a liberal allowance—she had learnt how to manage the house, and her dress, always providing also for her husband's appearance as a gentleman, and yet put by some saving from his professional earnings. By gradual instalments she had thus accumulated twenty pounds, unknown to her husband, wherewith to surprise him by the purchase of a piano, which she knew he would buy her if only his means allowed. As soon as her savings would purchase, as it were, one of the five-pound notes in which his salary was paid, she put it by, and so on until the whole

amount had been collected, which she placed for safety in a drawer of her little toilet-table. Suddenly she discovered the loss of her hard savings, and, of course, then the piano loomed in the distance, instead of its arrival being close at hand. No suspicion of dishonesty could fall upon Molly Maggs, the hard-working, simple slavey. Poor Mabel gave way to a grief with which her fond husband could not sympathize, as he knew not the source of her swollen eyelids. The only tears he had ever seen since their marriage she shed then, but that was quite sufficient to move him to tears; so they wept together.


‘Mabel, dearest, what *can* I do for you?’ was all he could say.

She, sobbing, said :

‘Oh, I have lost twenty pounds I had saved for a piano, as a surprise to you some afternoon.’

‘Well, dearest,’ said he, ‘if that is all, I will soon make up the amount’—*he* little knowing the difficulty of fulfilling his promise.

On going to the toilet-table to show him



where she had placed the money, they found that the four five-pound bank-notes had slipped out of the drawer behind. Then all was happiness again, and they kissed each other. The piano arrived in a few days.

In due time a boy-child was born of this heart-to-heart union. This maternal gift added to their joy, albeit it somewhat increased Mabel's domestic cares. Of course, as the infant grew, Nature asked the question of likeness to father or mother. Long discussions ensued, when baby was kept from its cradle after 5 p.m., until the proud father came home to fondle it (rather awkwardly) ere it was rocked to sleep in its mother's arms and deposited in the crib. After many such occasions of observation and scrutiny of the little cherub's face and form, it was at last agreed that father could claim the head, and perhaps the legs, as his portion of baby's inheritance ; but that the neck, and certainly the flesh-plump chest and arms of the little one belonged to mother. When they were all three face to face, the baby-boy, holding

one arm around the mother's neck, would encircle the father's with his other arm, as if instinctively drawing them together—a human trinity in unity.

THE END.

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